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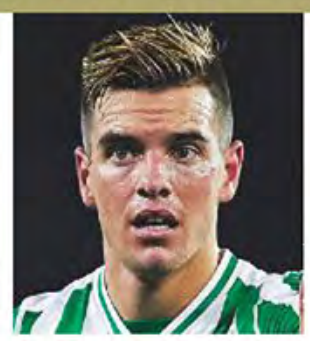

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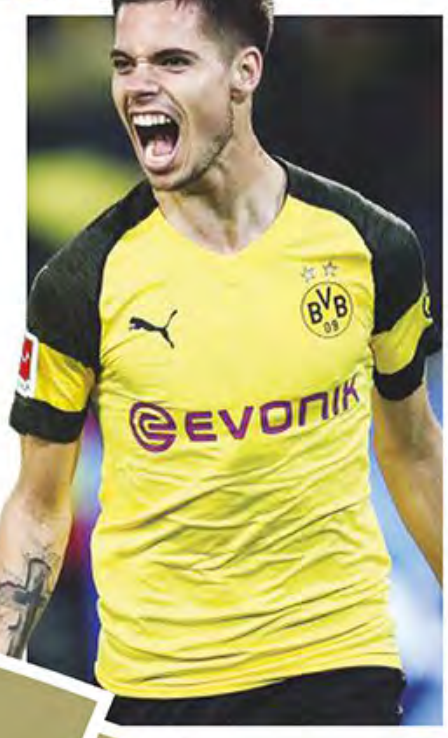

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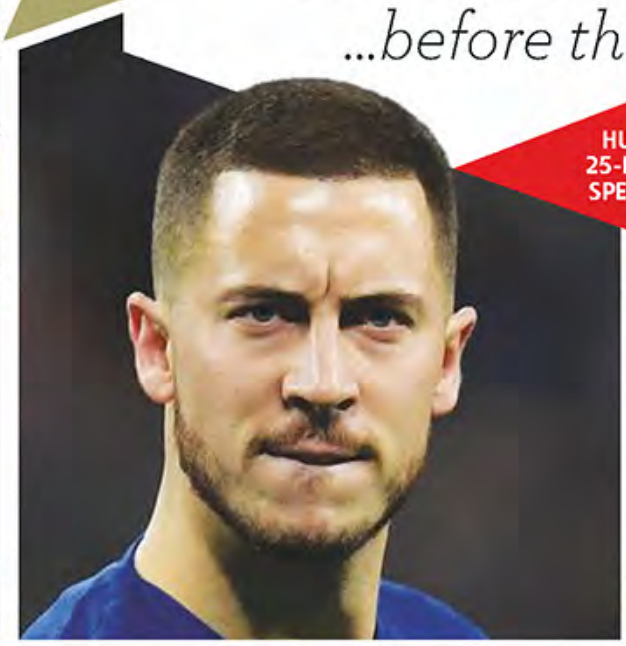

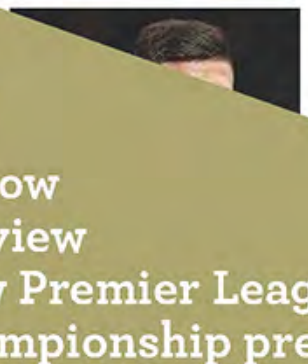

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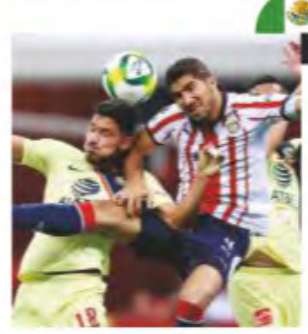

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In Pictures

The global game caught on camera

GOAL!
GOAL!
GOAL!

ENGLAND...Son Heung-Min is buried beneath team-mates after scoring Tottenham Hotspur's first goal at their new stadium

PERU...Marcelo Estigarribia of Argentina's Colon celebrates scoring against Deportivo Municipal in the Sudamericana Cup

SOUTH KOREA... Kashima Antlers' Yasushi Endo leads his team and the mascots out on a wet AFC Champions League night

BRAZIL...an Internacional fan leaves no doubt as to where his loyalties lie

SPAIN...Girona's Portu (in yellow) challenges Santiago Arias of Atletico Madrid

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND...Shamrock Rovers Greg Bolger gets to grips with Karl Sheppard of Cork City

HUNGARY...players and fans celebrate Hungary's victory over Croatia in the Euro 2020 qualifiers

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FROM THE EDITOR

I've yet to meet a football supporter who doesn't enjoy reading about transfer speculation. It's part and parcel of the game, but so much of what appears online has very little basis, often prompted by agents touting their clients – both players and clubs.

Our main feature this month – Football's Most Wanted (page 33) – is an attempt to sift through and weed out some of the more outlandish rumours that have been doing the rounds.

It presents an opportunity to focus on some of the outstanding players and stories of this season. Whether that's emerging talents such as Nicolo Zaniolo, Eder Militao or Aaron Wan-Bissaka; those who have escaped our attentions in the past, such as Kalidou Koulibaly or Samuel Umtiti; players who have slipped under the radar, such as Thiago Mendes of Lille; or those, like Nabil Fekir, Julian Weigl or Jean-Kevin Augustin, whose careers have not taken the route that many predicted.

> Transfer speculation is part and parcel of the game, but so much of what appears online has very little basis

Next month, things get very busy. The African Nations Cup joins a growing list of summer tournaments that demand our coverage and attention.

Until then, enjoy the issue.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

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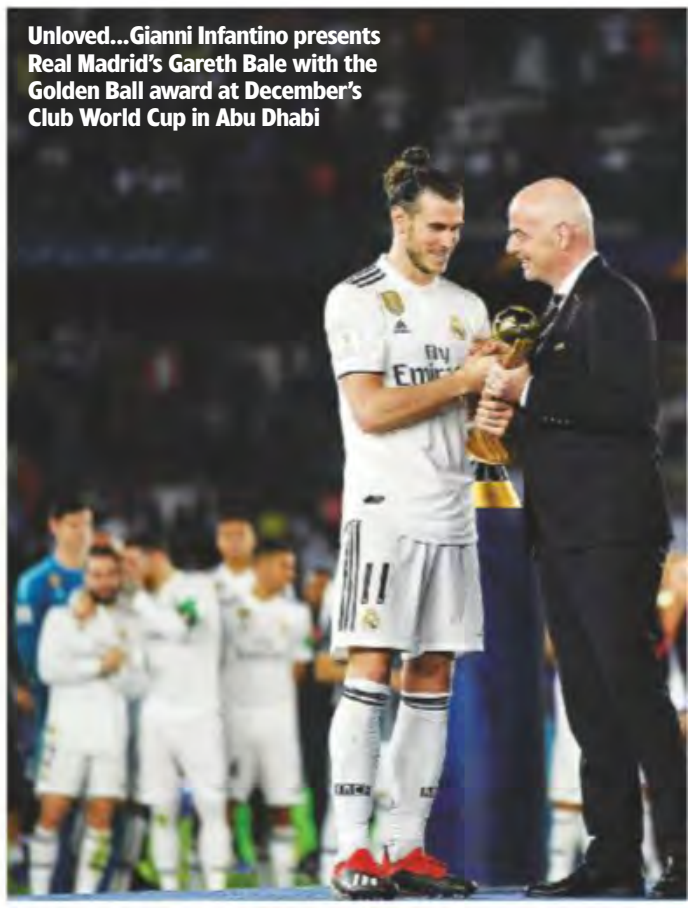

Unloved...Gianni Infantino presents Real Madrid's Gareth Bale with the Golden Ball award at December's Club World Cup in Abu Dhabi

USA

FIFA council approves Club World Cup revamp

FIFA has ignored European opposition and will press ahead with plans to revamp the Club World Cup as a new 24-team tournament starting in June 2021.

But scrapping the current seven-team event, which takes place every winter and struggles for recognition, and replacing it with a contest every fourth summer, could place the world governing body on a collision course with Europe.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino hopes Europe will provide eight of the 24 teams, with six from South America, three each from Africa, Asia and CONCACAF, and one from Oceania.

However the European Club Association (ECA), which represents 232 of the continent's leading sides, said it would not take part in any new competition until 2024 at the earliest.

ECA chairman Andrea Agnelli also denied reports that there was a separate plan to create a Champions League with four groups of eight, saying he had not heard of it, adding: "There are /atar from 32 to 48 teams until its annual congress in June.

"It is humiliating to have to enter into negotiations to persuade a player to pull on the Inter shirt. In future, when I name the squad for a game, do I have to send off 20 emails to the players' lawyers?"

Internazionale coach Luciano Spalletti reflects on the contract dispute with striker Mauro Icardi

COPA AMERICA

Argentina and Colombia to co-host 2020 Copa

Argentina and Colombia will co-host a revamped 2020 Copa America, which will feature north and south zones.

Six teams will begin their campaign in the north zone in Colombia, while six will play in a south zone in Argentina.

Alongside Argentina in the southern group will be Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and an as yet undisclosed guest. Joining Brazil in the northern group are Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and another invited nation.

The teams will play each other once in their groups, with the top four in each group progressing to the quarter-finals.

Prize...the Copa America trophy

HEROES & VILLAINS

Century...Balazs Dzsudzsak on winning his 100th cap

BALAZS DZSUDZSAK

The 32-year-old winger became only the third Hungarian to play 100 games for his country, equalling the achievement of Gabor Kiraly (108 caps) and Jozsef Bozsik (101), with his appearance against Croatia.

SOULEYMANE CAMARA

The Senegalese striker's goal in Montpellier's 3-2 defeat at Lyon meant the 36-year-old has been on target in Ligue 1 in 15 different seasons – making him the first player to do so in the 21st century.

JANO ANANIDZE

The Georgian international rushed to the aid of Fabian Schar after the Swiss defender clashed heads with Georgia's Jemal Tabidze during a Euro 2020 qualifier. Ananidze saw that Schar was unconscious and realised he had swallowed his tongue, and his quick reaction meant Schar was able to continue as Switzerland went on to win 2-0.

Quick reaction... Jano Ananidze of Georgia

RAHEEM STERLING

Himself a former pupil at the school, the Manchester City striker bought 550 tickets for children who attend the nearby Ark Elvin Academy to go to the FA Cup semi-final against Brighton & Hove Albion at Wembley.

Arrested...Jhon Viafara

JHON VIAFARA

The former Colombia international was one of five people who were arrested in Bogota on suspicion of drug trafficking and being a member of a cartel sending drugs to the USA.

DIEGO COSTA

The Atletico Madrid striker was banned for eight games after being found guilty of abusing the referee, Jesus Gil Manzano, who sent him off in a Liga game against Barcelona. In his match report, the official said the Spanish international had "insulted his mother", a claim that Costa denied.

ZURICH FC

On announcing the termination of ex-France winger Florent Malouda's contract as the club's striker coach by "mutual agreement", the Swiss side forgot to inform the 38-year-old, who later responded on social media: "Really, I didn't know that...?"

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Despite calls to lower prices for the FA Cup Final, tickets were confirmed as costing between £45 and £145, with the majority available to Manchester City and Watford fans costing £70 and £115.

Expensive...Watford fans will return to Wembley

"I've got five or six more years left in football and I just can't wait to see the back of it"

Tottenham Hotspur's Danny Rose responds to the racial abuse suffered by himself and other England players in Montenegro

Serge GNABRY

(Bayern Munich)

Two-and-a-half years after Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger declared him surplus to requirements, the 23-year-old has ended up having the last laugh.

Looking anything but a cast-off these days, he has enjoyed an exceptional first season at Bayern and is tipped for a long and glittering international career, having conjured up an impressive goal in Germany's recent 3-2 victory against Holland in the Euro 2020 qualifiers.

"Serge played really well tonight," enthused national coach Joachim Low after the game in Amsterdam. "His movement was incredible, he took on [Virgil] Van Dijk all night and physically asserted himself. His goal was top class."

Gnabry has a patchy record of staying fit in the past, but believes he has now found the answer in a vegan diet. "I'm feeling very good because of it," he says. "I just wanted to give it a try. I don't know if I'll stick to it for the long term."

Luca ZIDANE
(Real Madrid)
The 20-year-old goalkeeper son of Real Madrid coach Zinedine played his first game of the season at home to Huesca.

Razvan MARIN
(Standard Liege)
The Romanian midfielder's form has seen him lined up to join Ajax next season as a replacement for Frenkie De Jong.

Alexander SCHWOLOW
(Freiburg)
The keeper saved his side time and again in a recent 1-1 draw with Bayern Munich.

Mikel OYARZABAL
(Real Sociedad)
The left winger has been in outstanding goalscoring form, grabbing a late winner against Real Betis.

Matheus CUNHA
(RB Leipzig)
Scored a superb individual goal as his side beat Bayer Leverkusen 4-2.

Adama SOUMAORO
(Lille)
The French club's Franco-Malian skipper and centre-back has been key in their bid to qualify for the Champions League.

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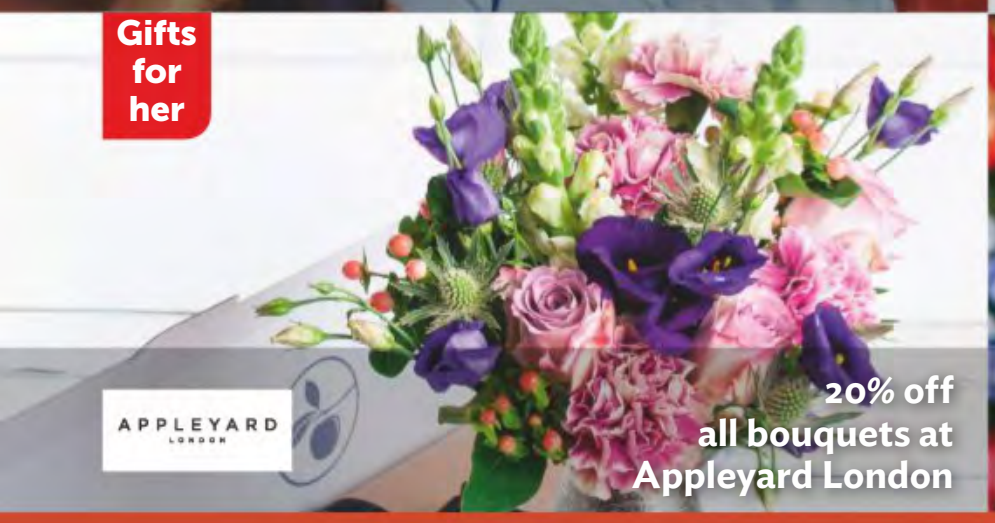

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Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

Watches are football's corruption currency

When is a gift not a gift? In football, that's simple: when it's a watch.

Luxury timepieces are collectibles for many of the rich and well-heeled in the upper echelons of football, but also for the self-entitled and the unbelievably naive. And within these ranks now count the latest hapless and hopeless recruit, Reinhard Grindel.

Football's grandees need no wristwatches to note hours, minutes and seconds; they count time only in computations of years until the next election stitch-up.

When it comes to examining the fuzzy line between gift and bribe, look back no further than Mohamed Bin Hammam. As *The Sunday Times* revealed, the Qatari supported his decade-long reign over the Asian Football Confederation with a generous distribution of largesse far beyond his nearest and dearest.

> Gifts such as luxury watches work both ways: as indications of unseen adhesion and/or as encouragements of personal and political loyalty

The fact that Bin Hammam was focused more on his own FIFA presidential ambitions than Qatar's 2022 campaign is neither here nor there; the point is the manner in which he compromised voting officials across Asia and Africa.

Gifts such as luxury watches work both ways: as indications of unseen adhesion and/or as encouragements of personal and political loyalty. They are be-ribboned with trouble and treachery for giver or receiver.

In 2013, Bayern Munich's CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge was fined €249,000 for bringing two watches, said to be worth £84,000, into Germany after a trip to Qatar.

A year later, senior directors of FIFA were forced to hand in watches gifted by the Brazilian football confederation at the 2014 World Cup – but not all of them were accounted for, and Michel Platini, then the UEFA president, has volunteered various different tales of how he disposed of his.

Another high-flying FIFA vice-president was Jeff Webb, the former CONCACAF president who surrendered 11 high-value watches towards a $10m bail bond which secured him house arrest while assisting the FBI and awaiting his FIFAGate sentence.

After all that recent history, any normal individual in football might be expected to run a mile from anything which ticks. Not so. Which brings us back to Grindel.

He parachuted himself into the leadership of the German Football Association (DFB) in the spring of 2016 when the German game was reeling from the fall-out from the Sommermarchen scandal, which concerned €6.7m that began as a loan to the bid committee from the then adidas boss Robert Louis-Dreyfus and ended up in the hands of the aforementioned Bin Hammam.

Stepping down... Departing German FA president Reinhard Grindel

The outcomes was Swiss and German judicial and tax investigations into Franz Beckenbauer and senior DFB officials Theo Zwanziger, Wolfgang Niersbach and Horst R Schmidt. Zwanziger and Niersbach were president and future president of the DFB. They, plus Beckenbauer, are all past members of the executive committees of both FIFA and UEFA.

This is the dustbin of history into which Grindel also promises to tumble, though UEFA may allow him to continue picking up his €500,000 in international honorariums so as to maintain its numbers on the FIFA Council at a delicate time.

Back in 2016 the bid cash scandal

created the power vacuum into which Grindel, then DFB treasurer, bounded. The prospect of football power was so alluring that this former lawyer and journalist threw over his political career and a place in the Bundestag with chancellor Angela Merkel.

He arrived at the DFB promising "transparency", that buzzword to which every aspiring powerbroker pays lip service. In his case, he said that meant receiving a modest €7,000-a-month plus a further €7,000 recognition for loss of earnings from being an MP.

Grindel introduced the usual handful of internal irritations, as is inevitable with a new boss eager to make his presence felt. Far more disturbing was evidence that he lacked any shred of diplomatic common sense, speaking up without regard to consequence.

Hence the overhasty renewal of Joachim Low's contract as national coach; hence the exacerbation of the issues revolving around Mesut Ozil before and after a disastrous World Cup; hence clumsy comments over Low's axing of Mats Hummel, Jerome Boateng and Thomas Muller.

Grindel did lead Germany's successful acquisition of host rights to Euro 2024 but the only rival was Turkey, whose own officials had long since given up hope.

By then, within the DFB, the knives were already out. It was merely a question of time – and of leaks weaponised by *Der Spiegel*, with perfect timing, around the high-visibility launch of German football's Hall of Fame. A cornered Grindel skipped a red-carpet entrance and ultimately slipped away through the back door to resignation.

Firstly, he was revealed to have bolstered his wage with a €78,000 package for heading a federation subsidiary, DFB-Medien GmbH. But he may have ridden out the cash con were the watch not a credibility killer.

This had been given to Grindel as a birthday present by Grigory Surkis, the former Ukraine federation president with a long and chequered past. Grindel said he had thought it a mere bauble but now, on having had it valued at €6,000, he understood he needed to declare it to the customs office. But it was too late.

It was also bad news for UEFA as focus turned to some of Grindel's European colleagues, such as Ireland's John Delaney, who is under domestic pressure over a €100,000 loan he made to his own FAI; beIN Sport's Qatari boss Nasser Al Khelaifi, who was delegated on to the ExCo by the European Club Association despite a Swiss judicial investigation; and Ukraine's Andriy Pavelko, who ousted Surkis controversially and is also subject to a criminal complaint in Switzerland.

To make matters worse, the Grindel revelations exploded just as UEFA's strictures against racism in football were being publicly flouted from Ukraine to Montenegro to Italy.

Troubles come not in single spies. FIFA knows it only too well. UEFA's travails, as it raises a lone voice in resisting Gianni Infantino's competitions expansion, may have sparked the odd wry smile in Zurich.

Grindel and his fellow countrymen have a word for it: *schadenfreude*. WS

Trio...Grindel (left) with German chancellor Angela Merkel and former international Philipp Lahm

WINNERS

STRASBOURG
Liquidated in 2011 and reborn in the fifth tier, they won their first trophy for 18 years, beating Guingamp on penalties after a 0-0 draw in the French League Cup Final.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
Made a world-record profit of £113million after tax for the 2017-18 season, with income rising from £310m to £380m.

PENAROL
The first away side to win two Libertadores Cup games at the Maracana, following up a 1-0 win in 1982 over Flamengo with the same result against the same side 37 years later.

SCOTLAND
Never recovered from conceding two early goals in their opening Euro 2020 qualifier away to Kazakhstan, who eventually triumphed 3-0.

WOLFSBURG WOMEN
Their Champions League hopes were ended for a fourth successive year by Lyon. They have lost twice in the Final and twice in the quarter-finals.

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN
Equalled the record for the earliest relegation in a Premier League season, joining Derby County and Ipswich Town in going down with six games still to play.

LOSERS

Paul GARDNER

WORLDWIDE VIEW

The backheel: football's space craft

While you will be familiar with 3-4-3 and 4-2-4 and 3-5-1-1 and suchlike as ways of describing how a team plays, I don't like this numbers game.

Firstly, because I'm very uncertainly grounded in maths, and secondly because the numbers are dull and, I feel, of questionable value. I usually have major problems matching up what I see and what the pundits have told me I ought to be seeing.

I know what I ought to be seeing: attractive, exciting, attacking football.

I also know that those formations are never designed with that in mind as they are invariably defence-based. Coaches are good at planning defence but not nearly so good at organising things up front.

I have worked on this matter and managed to overcome my aversion to maths long enough to devise my own numerical trio: 3-6-0. Something different because it features only nine players? The much greater difference is that these are not players, these are degrees: 360 of them.

My 3-6-0 is not a formation. It is an invitation; an invitation to players to broaden the scope of their passing. And it is an appeal for greater use of the backheel.

Any player with the ball at his feet can, without shifting his body position and by only a slight turning of his head, pass the ball forwards, or sideways, or angled slightly backwards.

Of the 360 degrees surrounding him, he uses, let's say, 260, and fails to utilise the widening triangle of space directly behind him.

While any player can make a decent heel pass, the problem is the lack of vision. Which means a blind pass and, quite likely, giving the ball away. Which is why the backheel pass is so seldom seen.

That such a pass can utterly bamboozle opponents is a fact. But if it is equally likely to fool team-mates who are simply not ready for it, it

Disguise...Cardiff City's Nathaniel Mendez-Laing beats Danilo of Manchester City

Special...Allan Cruz

becomes a double-edged weapon.

So, the 3-6-0 is also an invitation to coaches to insist that all of their players be ready to use the heel pass – not simply for its flamboyance, but as a highly effective attacking weapon. And, equally important, that all of his players be alert to receive such a pass.

A typical misunderstanding came in Tottenham Hotspur's inaugural game at their new stadium. Harry Kane, 15 yards inside the Crystal Palace half, ran towards the sideline to collect a pass rolling towards him on the ground. There was space behind him, where Christian Eriksen was lurking.

Kane met the ball and backheeled it, first-time, behind him. But Eriksen did not anticipate the pass and the ball ran tamely to Palace's Cheikhou Kouyate.

Kane's pass could have been better, but Eriksen should have been ready for it.

A week or so before that, MLS bestowed its Goal of the Week award on

> Cruz's goal was variously described as cheeky, deft or audacious

Cincinnati's Allan Cruz for scoring with a backheel, leaving the Portland keeper totally bewildered. The goal was variously described as cheeky, deft or audacious.

Add spectacular and brilliant and you have Real Madrid's Argentinian midfielder Fernando Redondo at Manchester United in 2000. He used a backheel to nutmeg Henning Berg and then served up an assist for a Real goal.

The heel pass has daring, beauty and impact. Of course, if all the world's coaches follow my advice, the backheel will lose much of its surprise value, but I'll worry about that when it happens. In the meantime there is a place in the game for the backheel – not as a decoration, but as a skill to outwit defenders.

Coaches talk a lot about space on the pitch, but the unused space opened up by the backheel is still largely unexplored territory. Which is a great pity as anything making life more difficult for defenders should be mercilessly exploited. WS

REPORTS WE COULDN'T MAKE UP

Reuters

Vet...Itzhak Hayk

1 AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

Itzhak Hayk, a 73-year-old goalkeeper from Israel, has entered the record books as the oldest active footballer ever to play an official match.

Hayk, who was born in Iraq and moved to Israel at the age of four, played the full 90 minutes for Ironi Or Yehuda, a team in the Israeli fifth tier.

After the match, in which his side were beaten 5-1 by Maccabi Ramat Gan, Hayk received a certificate from Guinness World Records.

"This is not only a source of pride for me but also to Israeli sports in general," said Hayk.

2 THE NAME GAME

A couple from Brive-la-Gaillarde in France have been banned from calling their son "Griezmann Mbappe" after two of the country's World Cup-winning team.

A judge agreed that naming the boy after Antoine Griezmann of Atletico Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain's Kylian Mbappe was "contrary to the child's interest" after the matter was referred to the public prosecutor by local authorities, who have the power to do so if it is felt that a choice of name could be damaging for a child.

The youngster's parents have now decided to call him "Dany Noe" instead.

3 FAMILY AFFAIR

Goalkeeping brothers Blair and Max Currie were both sent off on the same day in Scotland.

Stranraer custodian Max saw red in his side's game with Scottish League One leaders Arbroath, and 40 minutes later Clyde keeper Blair, 25 was dismissed against Annan in League Two.

4 DANI ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Dani Osvaldo who retired in 2016, is the latest footballer to take to the dance floor.

The former Boca Juniors, Roma and Southampton forward has been partnered with professional dancer Veera Kinnunen in the show *Ballando Con Le Stelle*, which is the Italian version of Strictly Come Dancing.

Footwork... Dani Osvaldo

5 COMIC HEROES

Paintings depicting former International footballers and created by comic authors from around the world are being displayed during an exhibition called "Haircut Football Club" at the Cite du Livre in the French southern city of Aix en Provence.

It looks like a giant Panini album with 250 portraits lining the walls of the exhibition.

Styles featured in the exhibition range from the curly locks of Carlos Valderamma and Graeme Souness to the mullet of Mario Kempes, Ruud Gullit's dreads and the pig tails of Taribo West.

Hair-raising...no Barnet players are featured

"Everyone knows I have Sevilla in my blood, but there has been a problem with my white and red blood cells and I have been told that I have chronic leukaemia"

Sevilla coach Joaquin Caparros reveals his recently diagnosed medical condition

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

National job... Bashir Hayford

EUROPE

OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER, who arrived on an interim basis in December to replace Jose Mourinho, was appointed Manchester United's permanent manager.

Wolverhampton Wanderers paid Benfica a club record £32m to make **RAUL JIMENEZ**'s loan deal permanent.

VINCENZO MONTELLA replaced Stefano Pioli as coach of Fiorentina.

HUUB STEVENS was named Schalke coach after they sacked Domenico Tedesco, while **MARTIN SCHMIDT** replaced Manuel Baum at Augsburg.

Ajax number two **ALFRED SCHREUDER** will take charge of Hoffenheim at the end of the season.

LUCAS HERNANDEZ will join Bayern Munich from Atletico Madrid on a five-year deal this summer.

Return... Igor Tudor

PACO JEMEZ returned to Rayo Vallecano after they dismissed Michel.

Udinese brought back **IGOR TUDOR** as coach after sacking Davide Nicola.

Former Chelsea and Ghana midfielder **MICHAEL ESSIEN**, who had been a free agent since leaving Indonesian club Persib Bandung last year, joined Azerbaijan top-tier side Sabail.

Former Yugoslavia striker **SAVO MILOSEVIC** was appointed coach of Partizan Belgrade.

Home...Monchi

Monchi back at Sevilla alongside caretaker coach Caparros

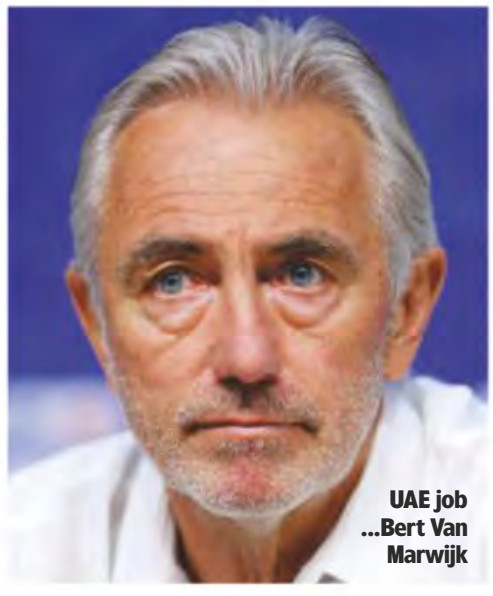
MONCHI returned to Sevilla as the club's sporting director after leaving his role as director of football at Roma, while **JOAQUIN CAPARROS** moved across from his role as the Spanish club's director of football to become interim coach following the departure of Pablo Machin.

Caparros will stay in the role at least until the end of the season despite a recent diagnosis of chronic leukaemia.

SOUTH AMERICA

Brazil striker **ALEXANDRE PATO** left Chinese side Tianjin Tianhai and returned home to join Sao Paulo.

In...Huub Stevens



UAE job ...Bert Van Marwijk

AFRICA

BASHIR HAYFORD, who was in charge of hosts Ghana at the Women's African Nations Cup last year, replaced Mohamed Abdulla Farayare as coach of Somalia. Frenchman **JULIEN METTE** took charge of Djibouti.

Franco-Portuguese **DIDIER GOMES DA ROSA** replaced Patrice Neveu as coach of Horoya just three days after he guided the Guinean side to the quarter-finals of the CAF Champions League.

Spanish coach **TONI COSANO** replaced Beto Bianchi in charge of Angolan side Petro de Luanda after their exit from the group stage of the CAF Confederation Cup.

"We played catastrophically, we defended catastrophically. Bayern clearly were the better team. We put no pressure at all on them. Not for one moment did we have the match in hand"

Borussia Dortmund captain Marco Reus reflects on his side's 5-0 hammering by Bayern Munich in *Der Klassiker*

Appointments, sackings and loans

Chance...Fabio Cannavaro

Cannavaro appointed China boss...for now

FABIO CANNAVARO was announced as the coach of China ahead of the recent China Cup tournament, succeeding Marcello Lippi.

Italy's 2006 World Cup-winning captain also retained his position in charge of Chinese Super League side Guangzhou Evergrande, while Lippi stayed on as an advisor for the China Cup.

China finished fourth in the four-team tournament, behind Uruguay, Thailand and Uzbekistan.

The Chinese FA has yet to confirm whether Cannavaro will be appointed on a full-time basis.

ASIA

BERT VAN MARWIJK, who led Holland to the Final of the 2010 World Cup, was appointed national coach of the United Arab Emirates. **JOHN METGOD** left his position as a director at Nottingham Forest to become his Dutch compatriot's assistant.

Cardiff City's **ARON GUNNARSSON** will join Qatari side Al Arabi when his contract expires at the end of the season, reuniting the Icelandic midfielder with his former international boss, Heimir Hallgrimsson.

Former Finland boss **MIXU PAATELAINEN** took charge of Hong Kong's national side, succeeding English coach Gary White.

OUT

Released...Ronny Van Geneugden

EUROPE

DIETER HECKING will be replaced as coach of Borussia Monchengladbach at the end of the season. The 54-year-old, who has been in charge of Gladbach since December 2016, will be replaced by **MARCO ROSE**, who will leave current Austrian champions Red Bull Salzburg in the summer.

Albania sacked coach **CHRISTIAN PANUCCI** after they lost their opening Euro qualifier to Turkey.

Capped three times by England and Aston Villa's all-time top scorer in the Premier League with 73 goals, **GABRIEL AGBONLAHOR** retired aged 32.

Polish champions Legia Warsaw sacked Portuguese coach **RICARDO SA PINTO** after a 4-0 loss to Wisla Krakow.

Sacked... Christian Panucci

Replaced... Dieter Hecking

SOUTH AMERICA

GONZALO HIGUAIN, who appeared at three World Cups and played in the 2014 Final, retired from international football as Argentina's sixth-highest scorer of all time, with a record of 31 goals in 75 games.

AFRICA

Malawi chose not to extend the contract of Belgian coach **RONNY VAN GENEUGDEN** at the end of his two-year tenure with the national team.

Club man... Gonzalo Higuain

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Tragedy...the horror unfolds

Football Association officials were culpable for Hillsborough disaster

April 15, 1989 was the date of the appalling Hillsborough disaster in which so many lost their lives, but the aftermath is still with us, and recently at Preston Crown Court a jury failed to reach a verdict on the alleged culpability of David Duckenfield, the policeman in charge of the operation in which a gate was so disastrously opened and 96 fans died.

I thought, erroneously, that the matter had long since been done and dusted.

My opinion has long been, and still is, that Duckenfield has been the fall guy, that the immediate blame may or may not lie on him, but that others are deeply to blame. Not least the Football Association, who persisted in using the Sheffield Wednesday ground for these semi-finals when numerous supporters had spoken out against the dangers of those particular terraces.

In charge...David Duckenfield

The FA officials responsible for such laxity have long since left office, but they are surely to blame beyond doubt for allowing Hillsborough to be regularly used.

I find it deeply ironic that the only figure brought to book, and now threatened with severe consequences, should be the former Wednesday secretary Graham Mackrell, whom long ago I knew and liked. Technically and legally you could, I suppose, accuse him in his former position of not ruling out the use of the ground that day, but what of his predecessors in the post? Arguably they got away with the stadium's serious vulnerability but he had the misfortune to be in office when the tragedy occurred.

Surely not without responsibility must be the senior policeman who stood down the officer previously in charge of the operation, allegedly because there had been some kind of indiscipline among the officers he commanded.

To then give the role to Duckenfield who had no experience in such matters banished belief.

Will the disaster and its repercussions ever go away?

> The Football Association persisted in using the Sheffield Wednesday ground for these semi-finals when numerous supporters had spoken out against the dangers of those particular terraces

Accused...Graham Mackrell

Stadium bans may not work

Should Montenegro and their putrid racist fans be thrown out of international football? They certainly deserve it after the malicious abuse of England's black players in their side's 5-1 loss, and the excellent Raheem Sterling has called for Montenegro's next match to be played behind closed doors.

Another talented black player, the defender Danny Rose, clearly troubled by the abuse, had an unhappy game in every way and has spoken of giving up playing – which I sincerely hope doesn't happen. It would be a perverse triumph for the morons who abused him.

The more obscure and backward the host country, the more likely that such primitive behaviour will alas occur. In such bleak circumstances, stadiums should certainly be suspended, though how much good that would ultimately do is uncertain.

Countries in whose teams black players are seldom, if ever, found will almost certainly continue to show such crude prejudice at games when such players are involved.

Disgraceful... a Montenegro fan at the game against England

Racism has always been with us in English football

Racism is still to be found in our own football. It is now something of a rarity by comparison with the case of such as Chelsea's Paul Canoville, who was so viciously abused by racist fans that he left the club in misery, but it was depressing to know that there were several unpleasant cases of such bigotry in one weekend recently.

Derby County midfielder Duane Holmes complained of such abuse at Brentford, where the culprit was arrested and ejected from the stadium, Wigan Athletic's Nathan Byrne was abused after his team had drawn with Bristol City, and Northampton Town's Timi Elsnik and David Buchanan reported abuse when walking in the city prior to their match against Notts County.

Anti-racism campaign organisers Kick It Out speak of such behaviour being deeply ingrained within football. The sole consolation is it is no longer remotely as bad and widespread as it was.

Abused...Duane Holmes (centre)

Honour...Gareth Southgate

Southgate deserves OBE

It was good to see Gareth Southgate rewarded with an honour. He did a very decent job in the recent World Cup when England punched somewhat above their weight and has done even better this season with those two five-goal displays in the Euro qualifiers.

It is greatly to his credit that he is ready to take chances with very young players, picking 18-year-old winger Callum Hudson-Odoi and implicitly criticising Chelsea's reluctance to give regular match time to a player of real ability and promise.

No wonder Hudson-Odoi is said to want to leave Stamford Bridge.

Jamie Vardy's career has been a lesson for us all

Good to see Jamie Vardy still scoring goals at the age of 32. He was, of course, turned down by his local club Sheffield Wednesday and did it the hard way, coming up through non-league football.

Brendan Rodgers, who has taken over at Leicester City, did not stint in his praise, saying: "He's unique. The players I've been fortunate enough to work with so far have had different strengths.

"Jamie's a joy to work with. You see him from the outside he's one of the best strikers in the division and has proved it over a number of years. I'm very lucky to work with someone like him.

"He does all the things you want him to do as a manager. When you're looking for runs in behind, he's already on his way, he's in. He sets the game up, he's in the box to score, he's a threat in every single game we play."

How foolish of the previous Leicester manager Claude Puel to have dropped Vardy from the team.

And what an inspiration Vardy should be to players who initially seem to miss a vital first step in their career when a major club lets them go or ignores them.

Inspirational ...Jamie Vardy

● Read Brian Glanville's weekly online column at worldsoccer.com

NEXT

Summer tourn

1

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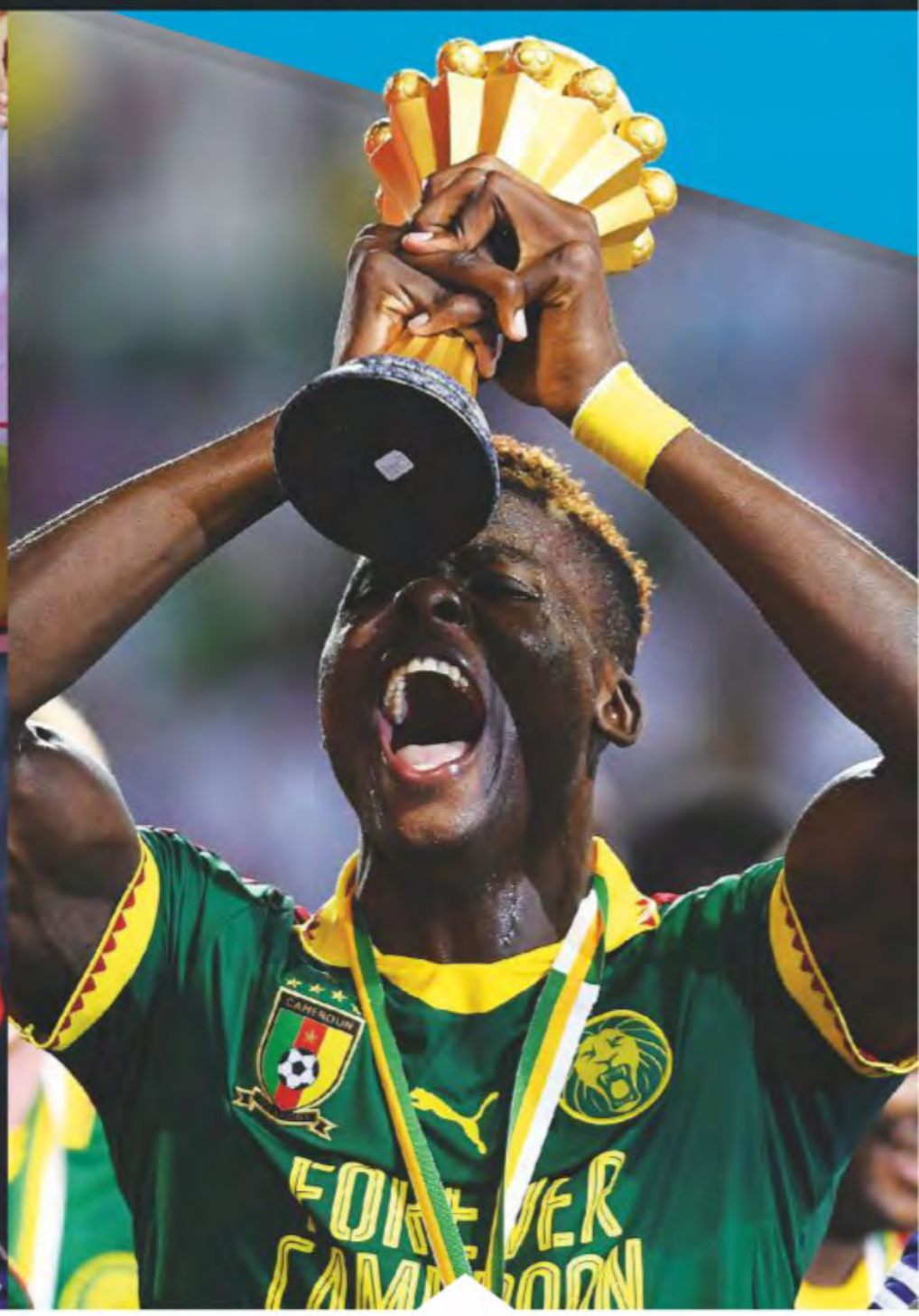

2

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

MONTH

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CONCACAF GOLD CUP

Summer issue on sale May 17

eye witness

Paddy Agnew reports

ITALY

Poetic justice for teenager Kean

Juventus star caught up in racism row

Sometimes, even in the cynical, fiercely competitive world of professional football, there is a poetic justice out there. Or so it seemed when Moise Kean, the current overnight sensation in Italian football, scored the winning goal for Juventus in their 2-1 victory at home to Milan.

In just one month, the 19-year-old's status has gone from that of a relatively unknown Juve reserve to one of the brightest prospects in Serie A.

Kept on the bench until the beginning of April, Kean – Italians pronounce it "Ken" – got his big break on the eve of the Champions League round-of-16 return game with Atletico Madrid.

Two-nil down from the first leg in Spain, Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri unsurprisingly opted to rest many of his normal starting XI in a domestic league game with Udinese three days earlier. In their absence, Kean made the most of his chance and scored twice in a 4-1 win.

And when superstar team-mate Cristiano Ronaldo was then injured playing for Portugal in a Euro 2020 qualifier against Serbia, further chances followed – and the teenager not only managed five goals in five Serie A games, he also scored two in two Euro qualifiers in only his second and third appearances for Italy's senior national side.

But just as it looked as though everything was going his way, the youngster – who was born in Italy to a couple from Ivory Coast – was the subject of racist abuse from Cagliari supporters after he claimed the second goal in his side's 2-0 victory at the Sardegna Arena on the island of Sardinia.

Having been subjected to monkey chants and other vitriol from a minority of home fans, Kean celebrated his 85th-minute strike under the noses of the Cagliari ultras, stepping behind the goal and standing in front of them with his arms stretched out.

> "Bonucci is saying something that many people think: namely, that blacks deserve whatever happens to them"
>
> **Former France and Juventus defender Lilian Thuram**

It could be argued that any Juventus player who chooses to celebrate his goal in front of rival fans anywhere in Italy is destined for a hostile reception, but the Cagliari fans outpouring of racial abuse was disgusting.

Juve's black French midfielder Blaise Matuidi had complained to the referee, Piero Giacomelli, about racist chanting during the game to no avail. But what had started out as, sadly, yet another episode of ugly Italian fan racism went nuclear when veteran Juventus defender Leonardo Bonucci suggested in a post-match interview that responsibility for the incident was to be shared "50-50" between the Cagliari fans and the provocatory Kean.

On the pitch, as the incident unfolded,

Ultras...Cagliari supporters at the home game against Juventus in April

Response...Moise Kean celebrates his goal (above) before Leonardo Bonucci steps in (right)

Bonucci had pulled Kean away from the ultra end of the ground, apparently trying to move him out of harm's way, in what looked like the classic gesture of a team senator modulating the behaviour of an imprudent young team-mate. And perhaps Bonucci's comments were made in that same spirit, in an attempt to offer some wise counsel.

But even though Bonucci would later go out of his way to clarify his position and express a total rejection of any racist position, his words prompted a wave of outraged protest, much of it coming from outside Italy.

Black players, past and present, immediately expressed their solidarity with Kean.

Lilian Thuram, himself a former Juventus player, was particularly outspoken in relation to the concept of "50-50" responsibility, saying: "Bonucci is saying something that many people think: namely, that blacks deserve whatever happens to them...Bonucci doesn't say that the fans are in the wrong, rather he says that Kean went looking for it.

"This is just like those people who,

Goal...Kean scores Juventus' second at Cagliari (right)

when a woman is raped, they go on about how she was dressed."

Thuram's fellow former France international Vikash Dhorasoo, who had a spell in Italy with Milan, was equally outraged, commenting: "The problem is that no white man can even begin to imagine what it feels like when a stadium, or part of a stadium, makes monkey noises at you.

"Does Bonucci realise the weight of his words? He is saying that the black athlete is effectively 50 per cent responsible for the racial abuse. That means that Kean should apologise. So, the colour of Kean's skin is a provocation, is it?

"It's just like what American activists used to say, namely 'my skin is my sin'."

Complaint...Blaise Matuidi (centre) pointed out abuse during the game

National coach Roberto Mancini and French Football Federation president Noel Le Graet also expressed their outrage, with Le Graet expressing his "support and friendship for Blaise Matuidi and for Moise Kean, both victims of intolerable incidents".

Mancini was one of many to call for action, arguing: "The way people behaved towards Kean is unacceptable. Racist chants have to be outlawed, we've had enough of them.

"We've got to take a position and impose hard-hitting measures so that this type of thing stops."

Mancini, who in the past has played

Reply...Kean celebrates scoring against Milan (left) with Bonucci (above)

> "No white man can even begin to imagine what it feels like when a stadium, or part of a stadium, makes monkey noises at you"
>
> **Ex France and Milan midfielder Vikash Dhorasoo**

Support...Joao Cancelo with team-mate Kean

and managed in the Premier League, went on to add: "Even in England, where they are much ahead of us in the fight against racism, these things still happen... but, still, we have got to do a lot more to wipe them out."

For the moment it is not clear what disciplinary sanctions will be imposed on Cagliari in relation to the incident. When the Italian Football Federation's chief investigator, Gerardo Mastrandrea, sat down to consider the case he immediately adjourned it so he could gather more evidence in order to understand "the dimensions and the real impact of these phenomena".

Given the international outcry prompted by the events at Cagliari, it is easy to understand why Mastrandrea and the federation are treating this case with the utmost caution.

It is, however, interesting to note that the only punishment handed down so far has been to Kean himself, who received a €2,000 fine for simulation in the penalty area after being yellow carded for an alleged dive.

The point here is that federation rules also allow for the fining of a club whose fans have behaved in a "discriminatory" manner – and that observation prompts two questions.

Firstly, will the federation use those powers? And, secondly, will it have any impact, even if they do?

No action...ref Piero Giacomelli

While football awaits an answer, Kean gave the perfect response when coming off the bench in the 66th minute against Milan to score Juve's 84th-minute winner with a goal in which he combined clever movement with lethal finishing.

And that's the thing about Kean – he is very, very good. WS

eyewitness

John Molinaro reports

CANADA

A league of their own

Nearly 27 years after the Canadian Soccer League folded, a new competition kicks off

The Canadian Premier League (CPL) will kick off its inaugural campaign with seven teams spread from coast to coast: Forge FC (Hamilton), York 9 FC (Toronto area), FC Edmonton, HFX Wanderers (Halifax), Valour FC (Winnipeg), Cavalry FC and Pacific FC (Vancouver Island).

The competition will operate a split-season format – as used in many South American leagues – with the spring and fall winners meeting in a championship Final in October following the 28-game regular season.

Sanctioned as Canada's top division, ▸

Photos: Courtesy of CPL

New start...this year's Canadian Premier League line-up

the CPL was founded by a small group of investors – the most notable being computer-software millionaire Bob Young – working in conjunction with the Canadian Soccer Association to help fill a major footballing void in the country. Although MLS boasts three Canadian clubs (Toronto, Montreal Impact and Vancouver Whitecaps), Young was at a loss as to why Canada didn't have a domestic league, and he quickly became one of the driving forces behind the scenes to get the CPL up and running.

"It made no sense to me or anyone else in the Canadian soccer community that Canada [didn't have its own league], despite being one of the wealthiest countries in the world," says Young.

Driving force ...Bob Young

CPL commissioner David Clanachan insists the league isn't in competition with MLS and points to the fact that the CPL stayed away from the markets that MLS is already in. However, there is no denying that the CPL was largely born out of a desperate need for Canadian soccer to develop its players and give them opportunities they otherwise might not receive elsewhere, including in MLS.

In MLS, each team is mostly made up of domestic players and is granted a limited number of international roster spots. US-born players are considered "domestics", whether they play for American or Canadian teams. But Canadians are only considered domestics if they play for one of three MLS clubs in their native country. Because "international" roster spots are at a premium, US clubs are hesitant to use them in order to sign Canadian players, who don't have the same opportunities

LEAGUE STRUCTURE

- 28 game regular-season: 14 home matches, 14 away matches.
- The campaign is split into two seasons.
- The spring season runs from April 27 to July 1 with all seven clubs playing 10 matches.
- The table then resets for the fall season, which runs from July 6 to Oct. 19. Clubs will play 18 matches in the fall season.
- The spring and fall champions will meet in a Final – format still to be determined – to decide the overall winner.
- If the same team wins both seasons, it will meet the side with the second-most cumulative points across both seasons in the Final.

as their American counterparts in MLS.

Toronto, Impact and Whitecaps all boast Canadian players, but they are in the vast minority and only a small handful are starters or see regular playing time.

Those Canadian players who fall through the cracks in MLS and other leagues from around the world will be given a chance in the CPL. The league's rules mandate that 50 per cent of every squad must be made up of Canadian players – with a limit of seven foreign nationals – with a minimum of six Canadian starters per game. Also, at least three Canadians on each team must be under 21 and they must play a combined minimum of 1,000 minutes per season.

"Those are pretty aggressive quotas and I'm not sure there's another league in the world that has those kinds of numbers when it comes to domestic players," claims Clanachan.

Talent... Alphonso Davies

The hope is the CPL will also expand the professional player pool in Canada, potentially giving national coach John Herdman more options in the future, especially with the country set to co-host the 2026 World Cup with Mexico and the United States.

Herdman is a big supporter of the CPL, but admits it will be difficult for youngsters cutting their teeth in the league to make the direct jump into a national team that can call upon players such as Bayern Munich's Alphonso Davies and Cardiff City's Junior Hoilett.

While Herdman hopes the CPL can produce a few "diamonds in the rough", he views the league as a potential springboard for young players to MLS or Europe, and that will ultimately benefit the national team.

> "The CPL is a huge positive and I'm hoping to see after the first season if a couple of players can make the move overseas or to a higher level"
>
> **Canada's national coach, John Herdman**

"The CPL is a huge positive and I'm hoping to see, after the first season, if a couple of players can make the move overseas or to a higher level. You'd hope to see that and I think that's what this league can do," says Herdman.

Canada has been down this road before, but this time it feels much different. The Canadian Soccer League launched to great fanfare in 1987 in the aftermath of the country's lone World ▸

Choices...John Herdman (above) with Junior Hoilett, and (left) Vancouver Whitecaps' Doneil Henry and Toronto's Tosaint Ricketts (in white)

THE TEAMS

HFX WANDERERS FC
Home Halifax, Nova Scotia – the biggest city in Atlantic Canada with a population of over 400,000
Team owner Sports & Entertainment Atlantic
Stadium Wanderers Grounds (5,000-seating capacity)
Player to watch Elton John, a veteran defender who spent most of his career in his native Trinidad & Tobago before coming to Canada
Coach Stephen Hart, the former national team coach

YORK 9 FC
Home North York, Ontario – a suburb of Toronto with a subway that provides a direct link from Canada's largest city
Team owner York Sports & Entertainment, who are headed by Carlo Baldassarra, who also owns Greenpark Group, which is one of the region's biggest home builders
Stadium York Lions Stadium (3,700-seat venue located on the campus of York University)
Player to watch Kyle Porter. a versatile veteran with MLS experience and who has played for Canada's national team
Coach Jim Brennan, the former Bristol City, Nottingham Forest, Norwich City and Southampton defender who earned 49 caps for Canada

FORGE FC
Home Hamilton, Ontario – 40-minute drive from Toronto
Team owner Bob Young, a Canadian businessman who made his millions in computer software. He also owns the gridiron Hamilton Tiger-Cats
Stadium Tim Hortons Field (home of the Tiger-Cats, it seats 23,218 but will be scaled back to just over 10,000 for CPL games)
Player to watch Kyle Bekker, a former top college draft pick of Toronto who has 18 caps for Canada
Coach Bobby Smyrniotis, the co-founder of Sigma FC, one of the top youth academies in the country

VALOUR FC
Home Winnipeg, Manitoba – the eighth-biggest city in Canada and located in one of the country's three Prairie provinces
Team owner Winnipeg Blue Bombers, a Gridiron football team who competes in the Canadian Football League
Stadium Investors Field (33,000-seat venue, also home of the Blue Bombers)
Player to watch Michael Petrasso, a native of Winnipeg who was once on the books at Queens Park Rangers
Coach Rob Gale, previously coached Canadian men's sides from under-16 to under-20

CAVALRY FC
Home Calgary, Alberta – third-largest city in the country and a stone's throw away from the Rocky Mountains
Team owner Spruce Meadows Sports & Entertainment, the company behind Canada's famous equestrian and show jumping circuit
Stadium Spruce Meadows (6,000-seat stadium located on the grounds of the equestrian facility)
Player to watch Nik Ledgerwood, veteran Canadian international who has spent the majority of his club career in Germany
Coach Tommy Wheeldon Jr, a native of Liverpool who made his way to Canada after playing stints with Swindon Town and Torquay United

FC EDMONTON
Home Edmonton, Alberta – the capital city of the province of Alberta and a three-hour drive north of Calgary
Team owner The Fath Group, one of Edmonton's largest, family-owned industrial companies
Stadium Clarke Stadium (5,100 seat venue named after the city's former mayor).
Player to watch Randy Edwini-Bonsu, a Canadian international who has played most of his career in Germany's lower leagues
Coach Jeff Paulus, a former youth-team coach who has also served in the Royal Canadian Navy

PACIFIC FC
Home Greater Victoria, British Colombia – located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, it's a four-hour ferry ride from downtown Vancouver
Team owner SixFive Sports & Entertainment, an ownership group that includes former Canadian internationals Rob Friend and Josh Simpson, and local businessman Dean Shillington
Stadium Westhills Stadium (6,000-seat, multi-purpose stadium that is often used by Rugby Canada)
Player to watch Marcus Haber, veteran Canadian forward who previously played for St Johnstone, Dundee, Notts County and Crew Alexandria
Coach Michael Silberbauer, former midfielder who won 25 caps for Denmark

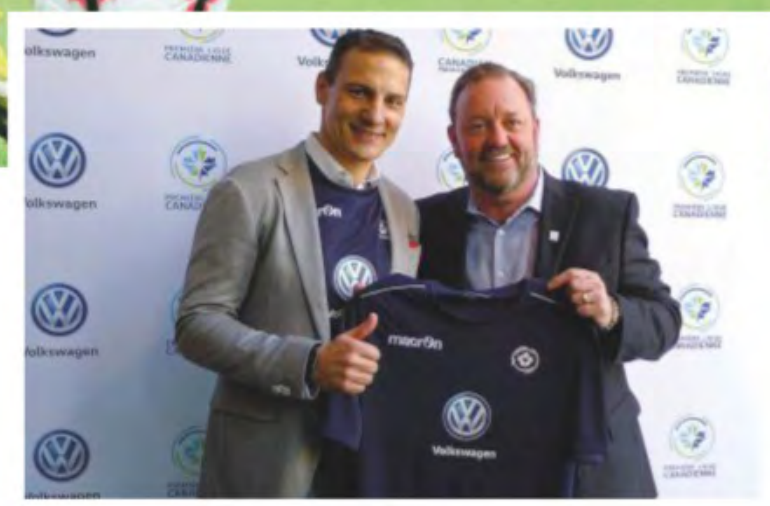
Challenge...Canada's Zachary Brault-Guillard is fouled during a CONCACAF Nations League game

Cup participation the previous summer in Mexico, before folding five years later, ultimately failing due to poor management, a lack of vision, and money issues.

The CPL appears to be on firmer financial ground compared to its predecessor. Major companies such as Volkswagen are on board as title sponsors, Italian outfit Macron is the league's kit provider, stable ownership groups are in place, and a 10-year media rights deal – believed to be worth several hundred million dollars – has been signed with Barcelona-based MEDIAPRO to produce and distribute match broadcasts.

Clanachan is already looking ahead and wants to see the CPL expand to somewhere between 14 and 16 teams in five years, at which time the league would think about introducing promotion and relegation.

But while optimism runs high, the CPL faces daunting obstacles to success, not the least of which will be the standard of play. Although billed as Canada's top flight, the CPL is essentially a tier below MLS and will largely feature youngsters who couldn't make it in MLS, Canadian veterans in the twilight of their careers and journeymen international players.



Business...David Clanachan (right) with Volkswagen's Daniel Weissland

Will Canadian fans, who have regular access to weekly matches from Europe's top leagues and the UEFA Champions League, invest their time and money in a new league that largely features players they don't know? It remains to be seen, although, Clanachan is optimistic, stating: "Canadians are patient and understand it's going to take time for the CPL to grow to a certain level, but as long as they see progress, that's what they want."

Another challenge for the CPL is expanding its fan base beyond "diehard" soccer fans. Soccer receives a lot less coverage in Canada than the other major sports. MLS has been in Canada since 2007, when Toronto entered the league, but even today coverage of the league is confined to the sports section of the daily newspapers and garners little mention on nightly network TV shows or on the vast number of all-sports radio stations across the nation.

"You know what keeps me awake at night? It's how do we cut through all the chatter about other sports leagues?" says Clanachan of the battle for relevancy in a crowded sports landscape. WS

WHO'S WHO: THE KEY FIGURES IN THE CPL

● DAVID CLANACHAN
The Canadian Premier League's first commissioner and chairman. Left his job as president of Tim Hortons, Canada's iconic coffee and donut fast-food chain, to become the league's head honcho.

● BOB YOUNG
Canadian businessman who made his millions in computer software. One of the founding fathers of the CPL, Young also owns the Hamilton Tiger-Cats gridiron team, who play in the Canadian Football League.

● SCOTT MITCHELL
Chief executive officer of Canadian Soccer Business, the group responsible for managing and marketing the CPL's commercial inventory and media rights.

● JAMES EASTON
As vice-president of soccer operations for the CPL, he is in charge of all on-field matters, including competition standards, player management and development, officiating and scheduling.

Founder...Young

Influence...Brennan

Coach...Hart

● PAUL BEIRNE
President of the CPL, he oversees all logistics for the league, including branding and club management. Formerly vice-president of business operations for MLS club Toronto.

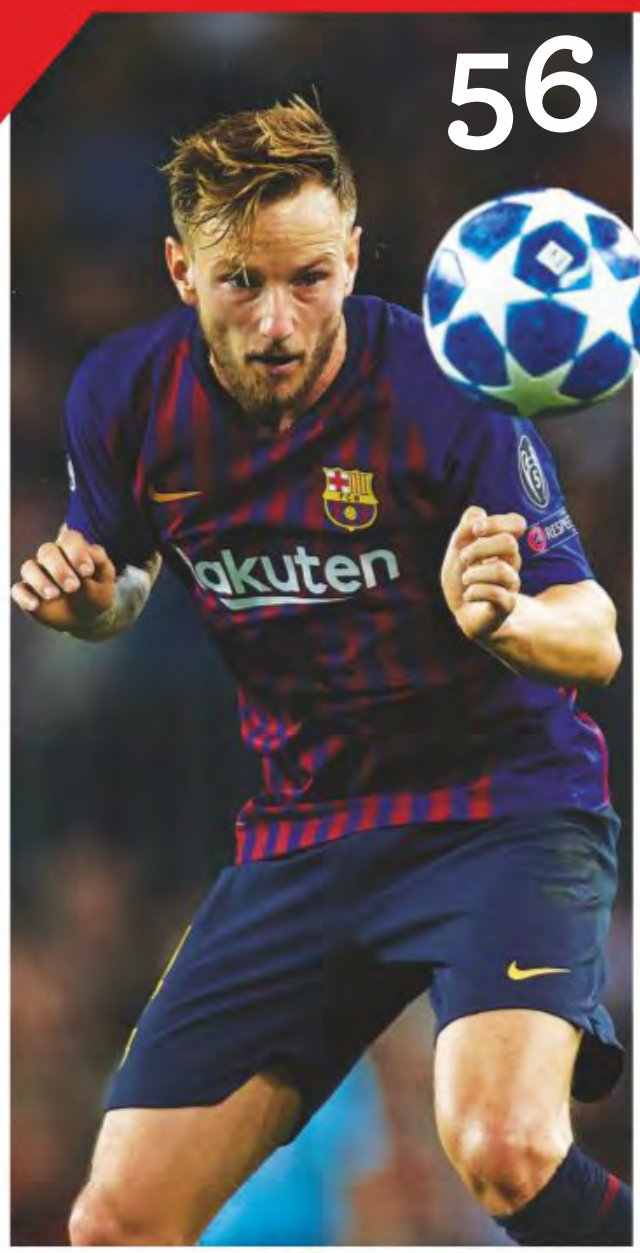
● KURT LARSON
One of Canada's leading soccer reporters during his time with the *Toronto Sun* newspaper, he is the managing editor of the CPL's official website, overseeing an impressive and growing editorial staff.

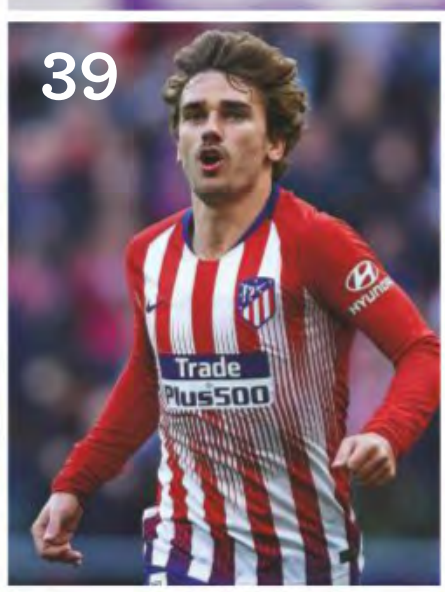
● JIM BRENNAN
Coach of York 9, he served as Toronto's captain during their first few seasons in MLS. A former defender with Bristol City, Nottingham Forest, Norwich City and Southampton who won 49 caps for Canada.

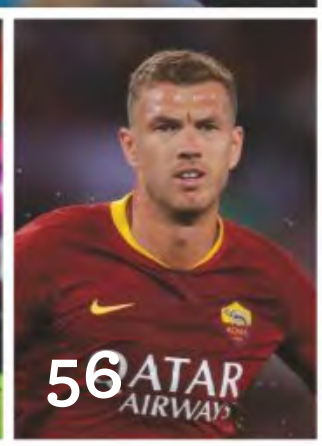
● STEPHEN HART
Coach of HFX Wanderers, the former Trinidadian midfielder has spent most of his coaching career in Canada. Took charge of the Canadian national team from 2009 to 2012.

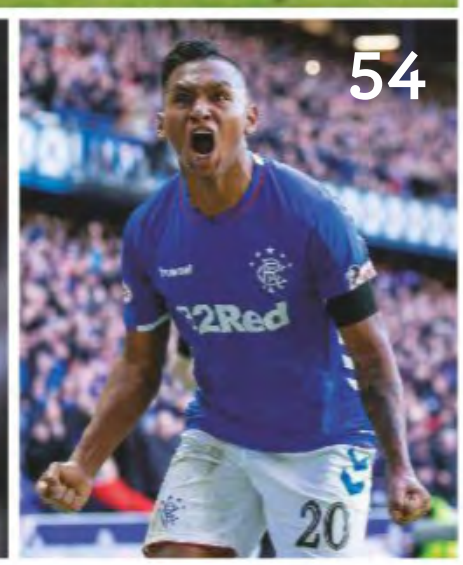
Football's

MOST WANTED









1 South Americans
Latin players who could be heading to Europe

2 Academy alumni
Home-grown youngsters who might be set to fly the nest

3 Headline acts
The big-name superstars who may be moving

4 Prime-time youngsters
The new kids on the block

5 Mature movers
The experienced names changing clubs

6 Bosmans
Players going for free this summer

7 Seeking more game time
Talented individuals who are in need of more on-pitch action

8 Unsettled
Those frozen out by their current employers

9 Loan stars
Players seeking more permanent homes

10 Done deals
Agreements for next season that are already signed and sealed

11 Under the radar
Lesser-known names set for a bigger stage

12 Surprise switchers
Names that might make an unexpected move

REINIER

(Flamengo & Bra)
Captain of Brazil's under-17s and attracting great interest even before making his club debut. Tall, imposing playmaker who can orchestrate from deep and play killer passes in and around the box.

LUIS DIAZ

(Junior & Col)
Quick striker who is at his best when cutting in from the left. Discovered in a tournament for indigenous descendants, he was outstanding in last year's domestic title win and is beginning to get chances with the national team.

JHOJAN JULIO

(LDU & Ecu)
Strong, sinewy, attacking midfielder who was the outstanding figure last year in his club's domestic title triumph. Has since been called up to the national team and will soon have outgrown Ecuadorian club football.

GIOVANNI GONZALEZ

(Penarol & Uru)
The son of former international Juan Gonzalez, the right-back has found impressive momentum in recent months, winning his first international cap in March. Has caught the eye with his strong forward running and crossing.

WUILKER FARINEZ

(Millonarios, Col & Ven)
Wonderfully lithe, confident figure who has been his country's first-choice goalkeeper since he was a teenager. A surprise that he has not already made it to Europe, the only explanation would seem to be the doubts about his lack of height.

AGUSTIN ALMENDRA

(Boca Juniors & Arg)
Central midfielder who, with a handful of games under his belt, is already linked with big European clubs on a regular basis. The comparisons come thick and fast; from Juan Roman Riquelme for his passing skills, to Paul Pogba for his box-to-box work.

MATIAS ZARACHO

(Racing & Arg)
Busy midfielder who has the lung power to keep running at defences, both with and without the ball, constantly putting the opposition on the back foot. He has clearly benefited from the influence of club coach Eduardo Coudet.

SEBASTIAN VILLA

(Boca Juniors, Arg & Col)
Strong, explosive, hard-running winger who won the Colombian league with Tolima before moving south to Argentina, where the speed of his adaptation and potency of his displays has brought him to the attention of European clubs.

RENAN LODI

(Athletico Paranaense & Bra)
Striker-turned-pundit Edmundo hailed the left-back as the revelation of the 2018 Brazilian championship and has been calling for the 21-year-old's inclusion in the national team, even though as recently as the middle of last year his audience would have been entitled to respond with a "Renan who?"

Having joined Athletico at 13, he made his first-team debut in 2016, followed by a handful of games the following year. For the first half of last season he remained in the B squad, and even when first-choice Thiago Carleto was sold to Saudi Arabian club Al Ittihad, Athletico brought in an experienced full-back to give them cover.

Yet they need not have worried as Lodi grabbed his chance. With pace, self-assurance and an interesting left foot, he made an instant impression – especially in the club's triumphant Sudamericana Cup campaign. He caught the eye with his cultured crossing and displayed an ability to break into the penalty box and shoot with either foot.

In a land famous for attacking full-backs, Lodi would seem to be the best of his kind to appear in a while.

"This kid is a monster," said club coach Tiago Nunes after Athletico had won the Sudamericana. "He really helps the team."

If Lodi was starring for a traditional giant from Sao Paulo or Rio he may already have been sold to Europe. But the team from Curitiba in the south does not attract the same headlines – although Juventus are far from the only European side to have him on their radar screen.

At the end of last year the player said of his situation: "My wish is to stay, but we know that it's difficult. Proposals are coming in, a lot is going on."

> "This kid is a monster"
> **Athletico coach Tiago Nunes**

Athletico responded by extending his contract to December 2022, but they do not expect him to stay anything like that long. Rather, it is a defence mechanism in a bid to ensure that they get full value for their discovery when he leaves.

That may depend on their fortunes in this year's Libertadores Cup, where they have been drawn in a tough group. If they can fight their way out of it then the chances increase that they will keep him until after the European summer transfer window. But if they fall early he will probably be on his way.

Sooner or later the rapid rise of the most promising Brazilian attacking full-back of the last few years will surely carry him to the other side of the Atlantic.

Tim Vickery

AARON WAN-BISSAKA

(Crystal Palace & Eng)
You know you are doing something right when strong rumours circulate about a £40million Manchester United bid for your services. But for the 21-year-old right-back it is just another indicator of how far he has come since joining Crystal Palace at the age of 11.

These days young autograph and selfie-hunters come running to the doorstep of his family home when they see his car arriving.

"There are some days when I just want to get to a place for a certain time and not get stopped [for autographs] but I am used to it now," says the defender.

Born in south London, his family have been integral in his development after Palace considered releasing him at 14.

"I was turning up late, I was lazy and I wasn't trying in training, looking tired," he admits. "Other players were fitter, doing more than me and I was just slowly going down the pecking order. I was drifting away with the wrong friends and there were times I'd have training at seven but be out with them before and it would make me late.

> "I was turning up late, I was lazy and I wasn't trying in training"

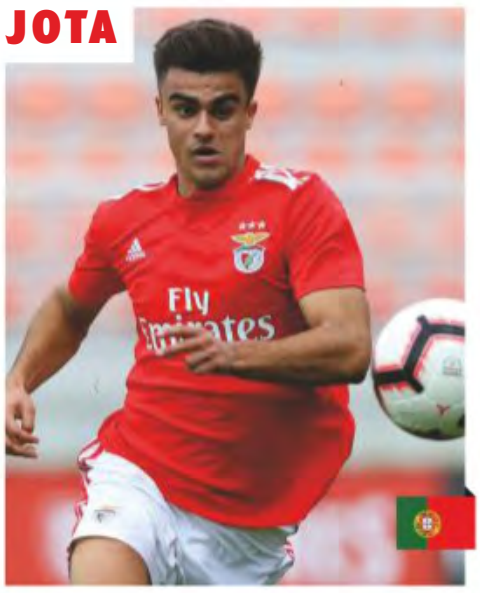
"Palace were looking to release me because of things like that, but my dad stopped me from seeing those friends. I was annoyed with him then, but it was the right thing he did, he snapped me out of it and I fixed up."

In October 2015 he was involved in England under-17s' final warm-up game ahead of the World Cup in Chile. The young Lions beat DR Congo 8-0, but Wan-Bissaka was not playing in his usual defensive position or even for England; instead, he was representing his parents' country in attack, in front of senior England manager Roy Hodgson.

Less than two years later he made his Palace debut under Frank De Boer in the Premier League Asia Trophy in Hong Kong, in defence, having switched the previous season from right-wing to right-back after coaches had noticed his penchant for tackling in training.

A Premier League debut followed, in February 2018, with Hodgson, who was now in charge at Palace. The months following Wan-Bissaka's league debut would see him make his bow for England under-20s, sign a deal with Palace until June 2022 and receive an under-21 call-up."I just kept it to myself for a bit but then I told my dad," he says of his first England call-up. "I know my dad was

JOTA



(Benfica & Por)
Nineteen-year-old who burst onto the scene this season, breaking into the Benfica first team and earning interest from Real Madrid. Joint top-scorer as Portugal won the Euro Under-19s last year, he is set to star at this summer's Under-20 World Cup.

DONNY VAN DE BEEK

(Ajax & Hol)
The 22-year-old midfielder has been one of the stars of the Amsterdam side's Champions League run and could be the latest starlet to leave the club. Tottenham Hotspur and Roma are reported to be leading the hunt for the talented playmaker.

excited, but he just doesn't show it on purpose."

Club team-mate Wilfried Zaha says of Wan-Bissaka, who is nicknamed "Spider" due to his long legs: "He does his speaking on the pitch and that's why everyone likes him."

Andrew McSteen

CHRISTOPHER NKUNKU

(Paris Saint-Germain & Fra)
One of the few homegrown youngsters to have broken into the PSG first team, but he is said to have become frustrated at a lack of starts. A reunion with ex-boss Unai Emery at Arsenal has been mooted.

STEVEN BERGWIJN

(PSV & Hol)
The 21-year-old winger is enjoying an exceptional season and was thoroughly deserving of his first senior cap for Holland. PSV insist a summer move to a wealthier league will not materialise but they may be powerless to resist a megabucks offer.

DAVIDE CALABRIA

(Milan & Ita)
The full-back has been with Milan since he was a kid and is being eyed by a number of Premier League big boys. Currently under contract at the San Siro until the summer of 2022, he prefers the right side of the back line but has also played on the opposite flank.

HOUSSEM AOUAR

Lyon & Fra
The Lyon-born attacker caught the eye with his performances against big-hitters Manchester City in the Champions League this autumn, but OL president Jean-Michel Aulas is likely to play hardball to get the best price for his latest starlet.

CARLES ALENA

(Barcelona & Spa)
The 21-year-old central midfielder is widely seen as the brightest talent to emerge in recent seasons from Barca's famed La Masia academy. Has found first-team action hard to come by, but a reported release clause of €75m may deter some.

NABIL FEKIR

(Lyon & Fra)

A year after suffering the emotional upheaval of having a £53million move to Liverpool nixed at the 11th hour, the much-coveted playmaker will be keeping his fingers crossed that he is not left at the altar in the next transfer window.

It was suggested at the time that an in-depth medical scuppered the deal, that an underlying knee issue had come to light. But in no way can the 25-year-old Lyon skipper be described as on his last legs. Within a month of his Merseyside move falling through, he helped France win the World Cup – appearing as a substitute in six games – and he has started all but a handful of his club's competitive fixtures this season.

With only 12 months left on his current contract and no renewal talks planned, OL are bound to be tempted to cash in. An expert in selling for big bucks and re-investing in younger models, Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas will probably grant exit visas this summer to a couple of his most bankable stars, and the smart money is on Fekir being one of them.

While some French sources are convinced Fekir's abortive Liverpool switch has shaved off a substantial portion of his market value, Aulas will have other ideas. If his asking price is not met, the plug will be pulled.

Assailed with questions about his future, Fekir has said: "I don't know what I want to do next season. No, I really don't. As I often repeat, I'm very happy at OL. The president and everyone else has faith in me. Each season is different. We'll have to see what happens.

"My on-off transfer to Liverpool? That's life. This is part and parcel of being a footballer. My knee is fine. This sort of thing makes you stronger, makes you work harder."

> "My on-off transfer to Liverpool? That's life. This is part and parcel of being a footballer"

Among those watching developments in Lyon with bated breath are Bayern Munich, a side in desperate need of greater craft in the attacking third, while returning Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane is thought to be a fan. So too are the decision-makers at Chelsea, who could turn to him should Eden Hazard bid farewell to Stamford Bridge.

On Lyon's books since the age of 12, Fekir is the embodiment of French flair: imaginative, cheeky and a proven source of assists, goals and all-round magic. His sort of genius always will be in demand.

Nick Bidwell

EDEN HAZARD

(Chelsea, Eng & Blg)
With 12 months left on his contract, the 28-year-old is approaching the end of his days at Stamford Bridge. Long-term suitors Real Madrid remain in pole position but a transfer embargo may see Chelsea fight to keep him.

NEYMAR

(Paris Saint-Germain, Fra & Bra)
Talk of a move to Real Madrid has persisted ever since he left Barcelona two summers ago and UEFA's renewed investigation into PSG's finances could force the French champions into a sale.

PAULO DYBALA

(Juventus, Ita & Arg)
The striker has found himself playing second fiddle to Cristiano Ronaldo in Turin, prompting talk of a summer exit. There would be no shortage of buyers, although the price tag for a player contracted to 2022 would be rather hefty.

ANTOINE GRIEZMANN

(Atletico Madrid, Spa & Fra)
The World Cup winner rejected a move to Barcelona last summer and signed a contract extension. But despite Atletico saying he is "100 per cent staying", rumours persist that the Catalans will return this summer.

MATTHIJS DE LIGT

(Ajax & Hol)
The Amsterdam side are preparing for the inevitable bids this summer for their teenage defender. He could follow Frenkie De Jong to Barcelona, but Manchester United, Liverpool and Bayern Munich are among those watching the latest developments with great interest.

CHRISTIAN ERIKSEN

(Tottenham Hotspur, Eng & Den)
The Dane has been in no hurry to extend his Spurs contract, which has just over a year to run. The 27-year-old could command a huge wage from a new club but Tottenham are ready to play hard ball with reports of a £130m price tag.

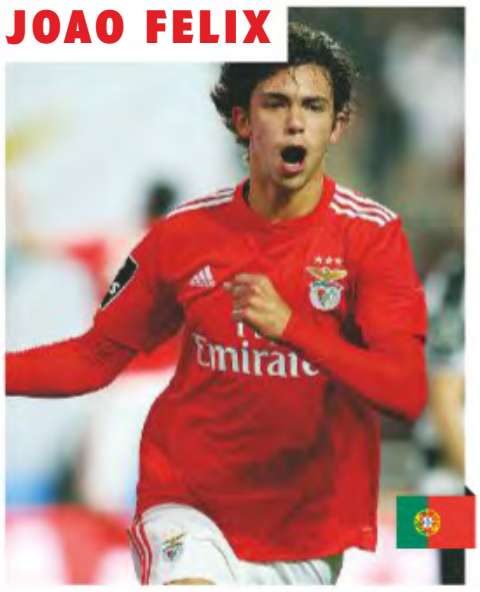
JAMES RODRIGUEZ

(Real Madrid, Spa & Col)
Although he has declared his intention to make his loan at Bayern Munich permanent, and the Bavarians are thought to be ready to activate a €42m release clause, Juventus still remain hopeful of taking him to Serie A.

GARETH BALE

(Real Madrid, Spa & Wal)
Injuries have disrupted his season and he has been made a scapegoat for the Spanish club's poor campaign. Any Premier League side hoping to bring him back to England will have to pay top dollar for his services.

JOAO FELIX



(Benfica & Por)
The 19-year-old playmaker has been a revelation this season and is now under contract until 2023 with a reported £105m buyout clause. All of which will be painfully felt at Porto, who released him at 15 because they felt he was too slight.

TIMO WERNER

(RB Leipzig & Ger)
The striker has reportedly agreed terms to join Bayern Munich in the summer, although no official bid has been made. Now aged 23, he holds the records for being the youngest player to reach 100 and 150 Bundesliga appearances.

NICOLO ZANIOLO

(Roma & Ita)

An ordinary kid with extraordinary potential, Nicolo Zaniolo was called into the senior national squad before he had even made his debut for Roma. And when his club did pick him, his first game was away to Real Madrid in the Champions League.

Yet this is a teenager whose mother, Francesca, still makes his breakfast every morning and then drives him to training before picking him up again afterwards.

Since making the breakthrough for Roma the left-footer has not looked back and has become a permanent fixture in the team, catching the eye of envious clubs all round Europe, from Chelsea and Manchester City to Juventus and Bayern Munich.

> "My dad says you can reach the top quickly, but you can fall to the bottom even more quickly"

His passing range is outstanding, while his two goals in a Champions League knockout game against Porto illustrate his eye for a chance. And as comfortable in a No10 role as he is as a lone striker or central midfielder, his supreme versatility only adds to the interest and his transfer value.

The comparisons with Roma legend Francesco Totti are inevitable and Totti is the man now charged with trying to ensure the youngster signs a new contract and stays to help revive the fortunes of the club.

Signed from Internazionale last summer, Roma's fans have quickly taken the £3.9million buy to their hearts.

The supporters crave a new long-term idol in an era in which they hope to leave the Stadio Olimpico and move into a brand new super stadium that has been given planning go-ahead.

And the player's protective father, Igor, who was once himself a striker in Serie B with Reggina, says he would love his son to stay.

"Are we renewing with Roma? Yes, exactly," he said recently. "Here, Nicolo is well, he is at a great club and he is happy with the club and his team-mates. All the experienced players like Daniele De Rossi and Edin Dzeko are helping him to grow.

"Given the kinds of figures circulating, I don't think many teams would be able to sign him. In Italy, I think, only Juventus.

"We have no preference and we will see in the summer. For now, Nicolo's priorities are the Serie A season and then the European Under-21 Championship."

The club with the biggest regret are Fiorentina, who let the youngster go in the summer of 2016 because they didn't think he was tall enough.

After being released by a club he had been with since the age of nine, Zaniolo considered quitting the game and says he felt "they treated me badly".

Instead, he flourished on joining Virtus Entella in Serie B and their sporting director Matteo Superbi says he knew straight away that the club had struck gold, recalling: "He has such quality and he is not a player who suffers

NICOLAS PEPE

(Lille, Fra & IvC)
The 23-year-old is enjoying a sensational second season at Lille, lying behind only Kylian Mbappe in the Ligue 1 scoring charts and attracting interest from a host of top clubs, including Arsenal and Juventus.

from nerves. I see a humble character, but also a steeliness, a strength of character forged by rejection."

Asked recently about the best piece of advice he has received in football, Zaniolo's reply was instructive.

"My dad says you can reach the top quickly, but you can fall to the bottom even more quickly," said Italy's shining new hope.

"He's always telling me not to get big-headed, especially now. He also tells me to remember how I felt when Fiorentina got rid of me."

Jim Holden

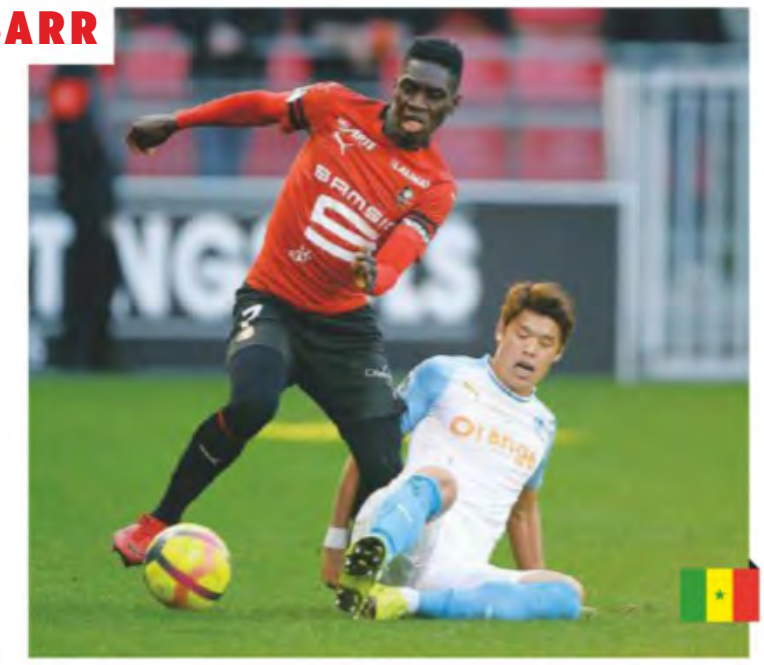
TANGUY NDOMBELE

(Lyon & Fra)
The midfielder extended his contract last year and the club are anticipating hefty bids for a player who impressed in the Champions League and is one of the few additions to France's post World Cup squad.

JOACHIM ANDERSEN

(Sampdoria, Ita & Den)
A ball-playing centre-back who managed just six Serie A games last season before breaking through this term, prompting speculation that he will be the latest prospect to be sold on by Samp.

ISMAILA SARR



(Rennes, Fra & Sen)
The speedy winger has been on many clubs' radar since impressing at the 2018 World Cup. Shone in the Europa League this season for Rennes, who have him under contract until 2021, but this summer may be the right time for the 21-year-old to move on.

HIRVING LOZANO

(PSV, Hol & Mex)
The 23-year-old is two years into a six-year contract in Eindhoven but could be sold. Began his career in Mexico with Pachuca, whose president Jesus Martinez claims that Manchester United have been watching the winger "since he was 16".

KALIDOU KOULIBALY

(Napoli, Ita & Senegal)
Given the dearth of top-class centre-backs these days, it's hardly surprising that Napoli's Senegalese stopper is the subject of a thousand and one transfer rumours. Scarce commodities are inevitably priced at a premium rate, thus the reserve price of €100million. And club president Aurelio De Laurentiis, who is one of the most uncompromising figures in football, will only will do business if a king's ransom is involved.

Interested parties are going to have to dig extremely deep for the 27-year-old. Besides shelling out a world-record fee for a defender, they must also improve on Koulibaly's current remuneration package, which nets him some €6m per annum including bonuses.

Napoli are playing a disciplined game at the moment. And so they should. They have Koulibaly under contractual lock and key until 2023 and can sit back and watch the one-upmanship games unfold. Whatever the outcome, De Laurentiis and co will be the winners.

> "We're not forced to sell and make capital gains. Does this apply to Koulibaly? Absolutely"
> **Napoli coach Carlo Ancelotti**

Napoli coach Carlo Ancelotti recently insisted that the imposing centre-back would not be moving on this summer. "All our big names will remain here," he told Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*. "We are not forced to sell and make capital gains. Does this also apply to Koulibaly? Absolutely. He is not moving from here."

Fighting talk in every sense, but exactly how will Napoli react if a sky-high offer is put on the table? A nine-figure windfall would be mightily persuasive and if recent history is anything to go by they may eventually crack, just as they did when cashing in on strikers Edinson Cavani and Gonzalo Higuain.

Known affectionately as K2 after the world's second-highest mountain, Koulibaly will have a difficult decision to make. Tipped to quit Napoli for some time now, he has a very prestigious set of suitors.

According to Spanish daily *AS*, he is a target for Real Madrid, who see him as a replacement for unsettled French international Raphael Varane. Manchester United, meanwhile, have identified him as the answer to their long-standing woes in central defence. And desperate for greater Champions League competitiveness, free-spending

JAN OBLAK

(Atletico Madrid, Spa & Sln)
Arguably the world's best keeper on current form, he has been in talks for an improved contract at Atletico after snubbing interest from Chelsea last summer. Could be a replacement for David De Gea at Manchester United.

NICOLAS TAGLIAFICO

(Ajax, Hol & Arg)
While Ajax youngsters Frenkie De Jong and Matthijs De Ligt have hogged headlines, the full-back has attracted interest from some of Europe's wealthiest clubs, but Ajax hope he will stay in Amsterdam for at least another season.

Paris Saint-Germain are lurking with intent too.

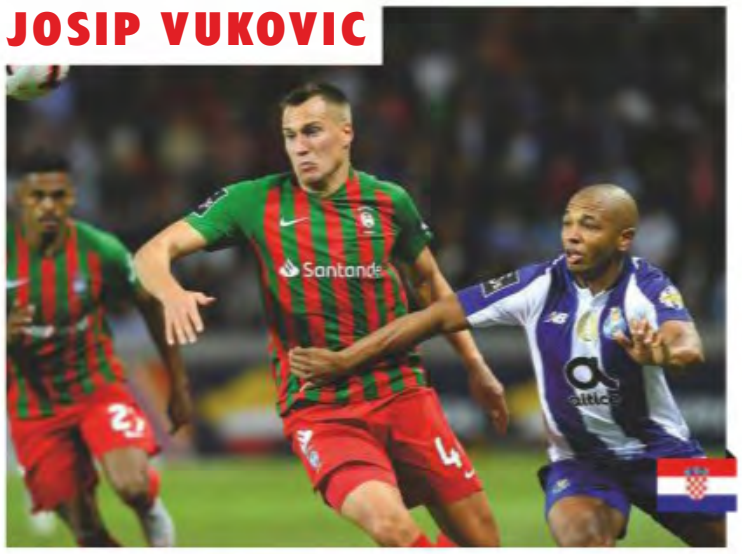
A switch to Ligue 1 may especially appeal to the west African colossus. He was born and raised in the eastern French town of Saint-Die and kick-started his career at top local club Metz.

Nick Bidwell

THORGAN HAZARD

(Bor M'gladbach, Ger & Blg)
Eden's younger brother has established himself as a key figure at Gladbach. The player is reported to be keen on a summer move to Borussia Dortmund but Gladbach would rather not sell him to a Bundesliga rival.

JOSIP VUKOVIC

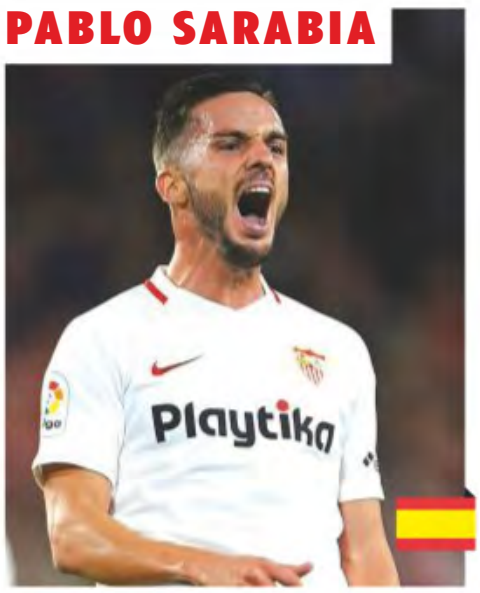


(Maritimo, Por & Cro)
The 26-year-old central midfielder's career has been an injury-hit slow burner. However, his form in Portugal during the current campaign has alerted the likes of Rangers, Benfica, Sporting and Villarreal.

ANTE REBIC

(Eintracht Frankfurt, Ger & Cro)
The Croatian World Cup finalist extended his contract with Eintracht last year but the striker continues to be linked with a move away. Manchester United, Tottenham and Bayern Munich are among those said to be interested.

PABLO SARABIA

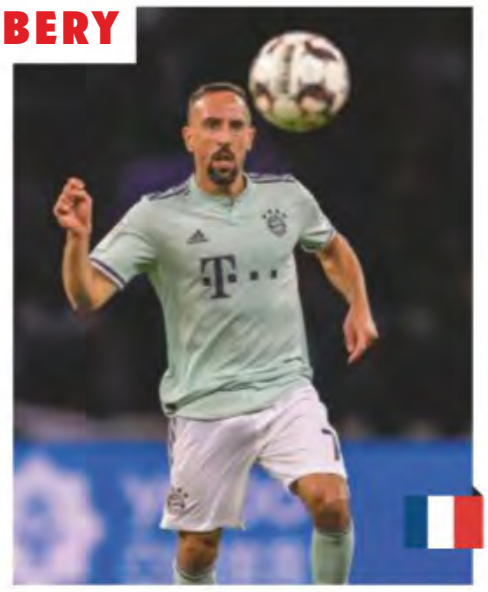


(Sevilla & Spa)
With a year left on his contract, Sevilla are resigned to losing their goalscoring midfielder. With a release clause set at €18m, Real Madrid could pick up a bargain. Made one appearance for Real, in a 2010 Champions League game.

FLORIAN THAUVIN

(Marseille & Fra)
The ex-Newcastle flop has revived his career back in France, playing his way into *Les Bleus'* 2018 World Cup squad and attracting interest from Bayern Munich, Chelsea, Atletico Madrid and Roma. He was an Under-20 World Cup winner in 2013.

FRANCK RIBERY

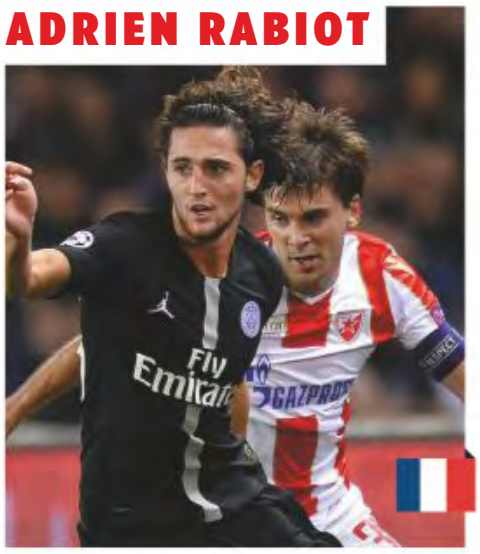


(Bayern Munich, Ger & Fra)
The 36-year-old winger is fast approaching the end of the road in Bavaria, having signed a one-year contract extension last summer. A final payday in China or the Middle East beckons.

ARJEN ROBBEN

(Bayern Munich, Ger & Hol)
After a decade at Bayern, the 35-year-old attacker will leave in the summer. He insists he will carry on playing, so a return to Holland or perhaps a contract in China or USA are the most likely options.

ADRIEN RABIOT



(Paris Saint-Germain & Fra)
Real Madrid are keen to land a midfielder who has been frozen out by PSG after refusing a new contract. He has not played since December and was also disciplined for partying after the club's Champions League exit.

OLIVIER GIROUD

(Chelsea, Eng & Fra)
The 32-year-old World Cup winner is out of contract this summer, so French clubs Lyon and Marseille are hoping to take him home. They will not, however, be able to match his current wage packet which is a reported £4.4m a year.

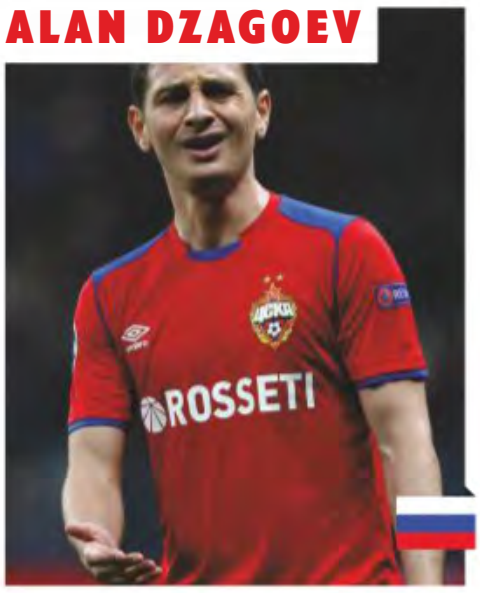
MAX KRUSE

(Werder Bremen & Ger)
The 31-year-old striker has yet to agree an extension to his current deal, which expires this summer, putting several Bundesliga clubs on high alert. Yet to win a trophy – other than the German Super Cup – he has led his side to the domestic cup semis this season.

VICTOR RUIZ

(Villarreal & Spa)
After four seasons at Villarreal, the 30-year-old centre-back is set to move on, with Zenit looking to resume the interest they showed last summer. He was in the Villarreal side that knocked the Russian club out of this season's Europa League.

ALAN DZAGOEV



(CSKA Moscow & Rus)
After more than a decade with CSKA, the 28-year-old will be available on a free transfer this summer. While not the much-hyped talent that dazzled at Euro 2008, the CSKA captain will not be short of suitors. Was of interest to Arsenal in the past.

ANDER HERRERA

(Manchester United, Eng & Spa)
The 29-year-old looks all set to leave Old Trafford after five seasons, having failed to agree a new contract. Paris Saint-Germain, who are much in need of midfield reinforcements, could offer him the big deal he is hoping for.

YACINE BRAHIMI

(Porto, Por & Alg)
At 29, the BBC's African Player of the Year in 2014 will find himself at a career crossroads when he becomes a free agent on the last day of June.

While Italian sports daily *La Corriere dello Sport* claims Lazio are at the front of the queue for his signature and are willing to give him a lucrative five-year contract, *France Football* magazine suggests Internazionale are in pole position. There was even a rumour late last year that Benfica were interested, ever keen to cause embarrassment to their domestic arch-rivals.

With 45 caps for his country and more than 30 appearances in the Champions League, Brahimi has bags of experience but can be a little prone to inconsistency. However, when it all comes together for him it makes for an explosive mix. Last season, for example, he was in dazzling form for Porto and was one of the most influential figures in their first domestic league title since 2013.

The Paris native is a rare example of FCP failing to reap a handsome dividend from a re-sale. After paying Granada of Spain just €6.5million for him in 2014, the club would have hoped to make a substantial profit. But for once they came off second-best to a single-minded pro and his entourage.

Brahimi, whose current annual pay packet is reported to be around €1.5m, was apparently demanding double to re-sign, but Porto refused to play ball.

"This is a subject which we have gone over 200 times," claimed club president Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa. "Only Brahimi can decide if he wants to stay here or not. He's received our propositions and how much we can offer him. He has the right to opt for other clubs."

A former pupil at the French national academy at Clairefontaine, Brahimi has never been one for making the most obvious of career choices. At 16 he quit Paris Saint-Germain for Rennes – a club with a far better record of churning out professionals and giving them a chance in the first team.

The risk-loving Algerian might just have another left-field surprise in store when choosing his next destination.

Nick Bidwell

> "Only Brahimi can decide if he wants to stay here or not. He's received our propositions and how much we can offer him. He has the right to opt for other clubs"
> **Porto president Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa**

CALLUM HUDSON-ODOI

(Chelsea & Eng)
After a brilliant international debut, the 18-year-old returned to an uncertain future at Chelsea, where Maurizio Sarri has used him sparingly. Bayern Munich offered £35m in January and will bid again.

DOUGLAS COSTA

(Juventus, Ita & Bra)
A disappointing season has been marred by his poor behaviour on and off the pitch, forcing Juve to consider cutting their losses on a wide man signed last summer after some sparkling performances on loan the previous term.

JULIAN WEIGL

(Borussia Dortmund & Ger)
No one would blame the midfield regulator for contemplating a move away from the Westfalenstadion. The 23-year-old German international admits he is not a particularly patient character, so he must be frustrated at his lack of starts in the Bundesliga and Champions League this term. As a player whose game is 90 per cent based on passing accuracy, it's imperative that he is sharp and in sync. A part-time brief is no use to him whatsoever. Rust never sleeps.

Circumstances have not been kind to him of late. He missed virtually the entire pre-season with a complicated groin problem and while kicking his heels on the sidelines he was helpless to prevent new signings Axel Witsel and Thomas Delaney establishing themselves as the first-choice holding duo.

> Rarely giving the ball away and never appearing to be rushed, German sports writers have rightly dubbed him "The Pass Machine"

On the rare occasions that he has started this season he has often had to fill in as an emergency centre-back. All in all, it's been a season of setbacks for the former 1860 Munich prodigy. In Dortmund's victory over Bayern Munich in November, he was so poor that coach Lucien Favre substituted him at half-time.

How different it was in his first two campaigns in Dortmund, when coach Thomas Tuchel handed the rookie the role of playmaker general, the individual who made the whole side tick.

With his boyish looks, Weigl might have looked like he was on secondment from the schoolyard, but in almost every other sense here was a fully fledged adult. So mature, thoughtful and self-assured, rarely giving the ball away and never appearing to be rushed, German sports writers have rightly dubbed him "The Pass Machine".

Capped five times between 2016 and 2017, he has not been the same player since Dortmund fired Tuchel two years ago. While Tuchel had rock-solid faith in him, the same could not be said of his successors in the hot seat: Peter Bosz, Peter Stoger and now Favre.

An obvious new destination would be Paris Saint-Germain, where he would link up again with Tuchel. Manchester City's Pep Guardiola may also be interested, having expressed his admiration for the Bavarian who he sees as a kindred spirit: a fast-thinking and flexible midfield

DALBERT

(Internazionale, Ita & Bra)
Big things were expected of the left-back when he joined Inter from Nice in 2017 for €17m, but he's been displaced by Kwadwo Asamoah this term. Linked with Marseille and Borussia Dortmund.

metronome. Other leading Premier League sides, among them Arsenal, might chance their arm, as could Roma and Milan in Serie A.

Under contract until 2021, he is by no means out for the count. All he lacks is a coach who believes in him and can restore his confidence levels.

Nick Bidwell

PHILIPPE COUTINHO

(Barcelona, Spa & Bra)
The £142m price tag has weighed heavily since his January 2018 move to Spain. Still only 26, but only a handful of clubs – Manchester United among them – can afford to offer him a fresh start.

MOISE KEAN

(Juventus & Ita)
Born in Italy but also eligible to play for Ivory Coast, goals in both of the *Azzurri*'s opening Euro qualifiers secured the teen's international future and boosted his claims for more starts with Juve, where he has yet to sign a new deal.

SEBASTIAN RUDY

(Schalke & Ger)
The battle-hardened 29-year-old midfielder left Bayern Munich after just one season last summer but he has found life in Gelsenkirchen less than ideal. Linked with a move to Manchester City as back-up to Fernandinho.

PATRICK CUTRONE

(Milan & Ita)
The dramatic impact since January of Krzysztof Piatek has kept the 21-year-old on Milan's bench this term after a blistering debut campaign in 2017-18. Linked with Tottenham Hotspur and Borussia Dortmund.

MAURO ICARDI

(Internazionale, Ita & Arg)
The striker only recently returned to Inter's starting line-up after being stripped of the captaincy amid a contract stand-off that has yet to be resolved. His agent wife, Wanda, is set for a busy summer, with likely interest from Juventus and Napoli.

FRANCK KESSIE

(Milan, Ita & IvC)
The midfielder's two-year loan from Atalanta will become permanent this summer, but Milan's financial problems may force a sale. A bust-up with team-mate Lucas Biglia during a recent game with Inter may hasten his departure.

JEAN-KEVIN AUGUSTIN

(RB Leipzig, Ger & Fra)
When it comes to the player-trade business, the best operations do not necessarily involve solid citizens and irreproachable characters. On occasion, great value can be derived from a reformed bad boy – and prospective buyers may see Augustin as one such "reclamation project".

The truth is that RB Leipzig, who signed the striker from Paris Saint-Germain for €13million two years ago, cannot wait to see the back of him. Still only 21, he might hail from the Greater Paris town of Plaisir – the French word for "pleasure" – but he has spread precious little joy during the time he has spent in Germany.

JKA, as he is known, often goes through the motions in training, is inconsistent and ill-disciplined, only warms up half-heartedly as a substitute – his default role for much of the current campaign – and has not bothered to learn the German language.

> "His potential is immense and with greater determination he really could help us"
> **RB Leipzig team-mate Yussuf Poulsen**

Two incidents last autumn cemented his image as a natural-born rebel.

First he was thrown out of the French under-21 squad after rejecting a call-up by text message, with coach Sylvain Ripoll angrily denouncing the youngster's claims of "muscle fatigue" as spurious. Then he was handed a temporary first-team ban by Leipzig for missing a team meeting prior to a Europa League defeat at home to Salzburg. It transpired that instead of attending the briefing, Augustin and team-mate Nordi Mukiele were lost in a world of their own on one of the player benches, headphones on and playing with their mobile phones.

"There are things that explain why some players were not ready for this game," stormed RB coach Ralf Rangnick.

Augustin's poor attitude has served to isolate him in the RB dressing room and team-mate Yussuf Poulsen has said: "In his daily work, he has come up short more than once.

"To be frank, as time has gone on, this situation has become irritating. His potential is immense and with greater determination he really could help us."

And Rangnick could only could agree, adding: "I understand Poulsen's reaction. It's completely justified."

Rangnick, who once described JKA as "brimming over with ability", has clearly made up his mind about the Parisian, who has made only a handful of Bundesliga starts this season and last had a full 90-minute run-out in October. Conversely, the French-Haitian has enjoyed considerably more game time in the Europa League, usually in the line-up at kick-off.

What a shame it has all gone so wrong. France's most influential

ARTURO VIDAL

(Barcelona, Spa & Chl)
The midfielder has not had an easy first season in Barcelona since his surprise switch from Bayern Munich last summer. The 31-year-old could be moved on to help pay for a summer reboot.

performer when they won the European Under-19 title in 2016 and once regarded as the jewel in the crown of the PSG youth system, Augustin undoubtedly is a special talent. Indeed, he has all the attributes to go right to the top: speed, power and general explosiveness.

He did once have the desire and in the summer of 2016 he spent the off-season working on all aspects of his game with a one-to-one coach. A new club and a new mentality could be the making of him.

Nick Bidwell

LAYVIN KURZAWA

(Paris Saint-Germain & Fra)
The 26-year-old left-back has found a starting place hard to come by this season. Tottenham Hotspur will be among a number of Premier League clubs interested in signing the French international.

JEROME BOATENG

(Bayern Munich & Ger)
Dropped from the national set-up by Joachim Low and now increasingly sidelined as Bayern embark on a rebuild with the defence centred around the younger Niklas Sule. PSG expressed interest last summer but were put off by the asking price.

MEMPHIS DEPAY

(Lyon, Fra & Hol)
Has rebuilt his reputation in France after a frustrating spell with Manchester United. Never one to lack confidence, the striker may now feel he is worth a second shot with another Champions League club.

ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI

(Bayern Munich, Ger & Pol)
Only four players have scored more Bundesliga goals than the 30-year-old, but he almost left Bavaria last summer and has yet to agree a contract extension beyond 2021. Bayern's pursuit of RB Leipzig's Timo Werner could force the issue.

GIOVANNI LO CELSO

(Real Betis, Spa & Arg)
Deemed unfit for purpose last summer by new Paris Saint-Germain coach Thomas Tuchel and promptly sent on loan to Spanish outfit Real Betis, the midfielder has bounced back with a vengeance, so impressive for the *Verdiblancos* that La Liga hot-shots Real Madrid and Barcelona are now rumoured to want him.

Asked if PSG have committed a mistake in this instance, one would have to say yes. Betis, who have the right to buy "Gio" for €25million at the end of the season, know a cash-generating opportunity when they see one. Three steps to a sizeable profit: acquire the 22-year-old's papers, make tracks to the Bernabeu or Camp Nou and conduct a double-your-money sell-on.

> "I do feel more at home as a box-to-box player. It better suits my characteristics. I can be closer to the opposition box and get on the end of goalscoring chances"

During his 18 months at PSG, who he joined from his hometown club Rosario Central in early 2017, Lo Celso for the most part looked what he was: a talented South American kid struggling to adjust to the European game. A poor game a year ago in a 3-1 loss to Real Madrid in a Champions League round-of-16 tie sealed his fate at the Parc des Princes. Too much, too young was the refrain.

Not that his problems at PSG were entirely of his own doing. With the benefit of hindsight, the Parisian side's boss at the time, Unai Emery, made an error by often deploying him out of position as an enforcer in front of the back four. The Argentinian rookie had neither the physical intensity or the awareness for that role. It was a classic case of a square peg meeting a round hole.

If Lo Celso is now thriving with Betis it's because he can play to his strengths there. Quique Setien, his coach at the Estadio Benito Villamarin, uses him much further forward, where he can showcase his creativity and shooting power.

Talk about a phoenix from the ashes. He has been nothing less than a marvel for Betis this term, intelligently pulling the playmaking strings and especially potent when linking with midfield partner-in-crime Sergio Canales.

"I have to say I do feel more at home as a box-to-box player," says Lo Celso. "It better suits my characteristics. I can be closer to the opposition box and get on the end of goalscoring chances."

One of his best displays this term was in the Europa League in October, with a man-of-the-match masterclass as Milan were beaten 2-1 in the San Siro. He ran the show that night for the green-and-

MARIO BALOTELLI

(Marseille, Fra & Ita)
The 28-year-old agreed a six-month loan deal with Marseille in January, effectively ending his stay at Nice, where his relationship had deteriorated with coach Patrick Vieira. The Italian's future beyond June remains uncertain.

LUKA JOVIC

(Eintracht Frankfurt, Ger & Ser)
A two-year loan spell at Eintracht is set to end this summer, with no shortage of high-end Champions League clubs keen to do a deal with Benfica for the 21-year-old centre-forward, who has simply blossomed in the Bundesliga.

whites, involved in all of Betis' most dangerous raids, setting up the first goal for Antonio Sanabria and then curling home a long-range beauty himself.

"Lo Celso is a great footballer," said Setien in his post-match press briefing. "He was the one who helped us find spaces when we attacked. He's growing up, he's improving and he's confident."

From Parisian outcast to La Liga headliner in one easy lesson.

Nick Bidwell

REISS NELSON

(Hoffenheim, Ger & Eng)
The London-born youngster enjoyed a blistering first six months of his year-long Bundesliga spell but has since found a starting place hard to come by. Another loan elsewhere or a return to Arsenal now looks to be on the cards.

DODI LUKEBAKIO

(Fortuna Dusseldorf, Ger & Blg)
The winger is another Premier League loanee who has benefitted from a Bundesliga sojourn, excelling at Fortuna this season. Watford will face a big recall-or-loan-again decision this summer.

DENIS SUAREZ

(Arsenal, Eng & Spa)
The midfielder has barely featured for Arsenal since a January loan move from Barcelona, who will look to sell him on for a second time this summer as they attempt to raise cash for their expected incoming purchases.

YOURI TIELEMANS

(Leicester City, Eng & Blg)
The midfielder has benefitted hugely from playing under Brendan Rodgers at Leicester after a miserable first half of the season under Thierry Henry at Monaco. The French side will be looking to recoup a fat fee this summer.

GELSON MARTINS

(Monaco, Fra & Por)
The winger has thrived at Monaco since the return of coach Leonardo Jardim in January, with the 23-year-old recapturing the form that he had first premiered in Lisbon with Sporting but then lost following a disappointing move to Atletico Madrid.

EDER MILITAO

(Porto, Por & Bra)
Porto, the club that wrote the book on turning low-cost talent-spotting hunches into bumper pay days, have done it again. And in double-quick time, buying the all-purpose Brazilian defender from Sao Paulo for €8.5million at the start of the season and concluding a deal seven months later to sell the 21-year-old to Real Madrid for €50m.

Even allowing for Sao Paulo's 10 per cent cut from the transaction that still leaves FCP with €36.5m of pure profit.

Real have never paid as much for a defender before, but at least they can console themselves with the thought that the bill could have been bigger still as Militao's buyout trigger was due to increase to €75m in July. Once they had identified their man, Real had to strike while the iron was hot.

A native of Sertaozinho in the north east of Sao Paulo state, Militao has been outstanding for Porto, both in a stopper role and as a right-back, while he can also do a job as a midfield enforcer. Real, however, only intend to use him at the heart of their back four.

> "I think it's important to be versatile. Coming through the youth system at Sao Paulo I didn't play in a fixed spot. It's helped a lot"

Having won his first cap for Brazil in a friendly against El Salvador last autumn, Militao – whose father, Valdo, was also a defender, with Corinthians – says: "I do think it's important to be versatile.

"Coming through the youth system at Sao Paulo I didn't play in a fixed spot. It's helped a lot. If I can bring out the ball with confidence from the back it's because of my experience in midfield. I've always liked to play the ball."

As well as securing the services of a major aerial threat from set-pieces, Real have also acquired a quick learner. Thrown in at the deep end on joining Porto, he took to European football like a duck to water. No teething troubles, no moments of alienation, no bouts of homesickness.

"Eder Militao is a very intelligent lad," declared Porto and Brazil defensive rock Felipe recently. "He takes everything on board very quickly. He's adapted so well to the European game.

"After a long run at right-back with Sao Paulo he immediately was switched to central defence on joining Porto. Yet he made it look easy. It looked as though he had been playing with us for ages."

One area he will need to work on,

AARON RAMSEY

(Arsenal, Eng & Wal)
After 11 seasons with Arsenal, the midfielder chose to run down his contract, opting instead to sign a four-year deal with Juventus. Reports on his salary have varied, but the BBC claims he will earn £400,000 a week with his new employer in Italy.

CHRISTIAN PULISIC

(Borussia Dortmund, Ger & USA)
Signed by Chelsea in January – and then loaned back to Dortmund – in a €64m deal that made him the most expensive American of all time. His summer move is likely to be the Blues' only arrival following their global transfer ban.

however, is his PR. "It's difficult for me to be in front of a TV camera," he declared last year in a Brazil national-team press conference. "I'm a little shy. I'm not so keen on speaking. I'd much rather play than give an interview."

He will have to change that at Real.

Nick Bidwell

BENJAMIN PAVARD

(Stuttgart, Ger & Fra)
One of the unexpected stars of France's 2018 World Cup triumph, he will move to Bayern Munich after signing a five-year deal. The fee for the right-sided defender was reported to be €35m.

MORTEN THORSBEY

(Heerenveen, Hol & Nor)
Capped once by his country, the 22-year-old midfielder signed a pre-contract with Sampdoria in January. He will move to Italy on a free when his contract expires this summer and has agreed a four-year deal.

LUCAS HERNANDEZ

(Atletico Madrid, Spa & Fra)
Bayern Munich have flexed their financial muscles by splashing out a Bundesliga record €80m on the French World Cup-winning defender. The 23-year-old will be a key part of a major personnel overhaul in Bavaria this summer.

DIEGO GODIN

(Atletico Madrid, Spa & Uru)
Having recently become his country's most-capped player of all-time, the 33-year-old centre-back will set out on a new adventure next season after signing a pre-contract for two years with Internazionale.

FRENKIE DE JONG

(Ajax & Hol)
The 21-year-old midfielder played a key role in his side's Champions League run this term and will return to the competition next season with Barcelona, who he has joined for an initial €75m with further bonuses and incentives tied to his performance.

WESLEY

(Club Brugge, Blg & Bra)
The Belgian side are set to make a very nice profit on a 22-year-old Brazilian centre-forward who was recruited from Slovakia's Trencin for €1m in 2016 and is currently being tracked by a number of clubs in England, Italy and Spain.

ALFREDO MORELOS

(Rangers, Sco & Col)
The striker has made a dramatic impact in Scotland since a 2017 move from Finland and his fiery nature – he has been shown five red cards so far this season – does not seem to have put off suitors such as Borussia Dortmund and Leicester City.

THIAGO MENDES

(Lille, Fra & Bra)
A late developer at the age of 27, the defensive midfielder is something of a contradiction; a player often undervalued by Ligue 1 reporters, yet immensely popular with European club scouts.

He came within a whisker of joining Paris Saint-Germain in the last transfer window, while Chelsea are just one of several Premier League clubs to take note, along with teams in Germany, Portugal and Italy.

When seeking to explain Lille's emergence this term as PSG's closest challengers, most pundits concentrate on the northern club's array of attacking talent, such as Nicolas Pepe, Rafael Leao and Jonathan Bamba. But equally important is the contribution of Mendes, an impressive amalgam of tactical intelligence, ball-winning grit, easy technique and pin-point distribution. Shame that his sterling efforts often seem to go unnoticed in the media.

The guardian of Lille's collective balance, he is always on hand for a timely tackle or interception, is an expert in plugging the gaps left by others and very clever in his passing. Positioned deep and able to survey the whole pitch, he is quite the master at linking the play and setting the tempo.

> "He's a personality and someone with whom I can exchange ideas. He really thinks about the game"
> **Lille coach Christophe Galtier**

Now in his second season with Lille – who he joined for €9million from Sao Paulo in 2017 – he will not break the bank either, with his current employers thought to want a relatively affordable €25-30m for him. Despite a recent recapitalisation programme, LOSC still have debts of around €100m and chairman Gerard Lopez has made it clear that he intends to erase the deficit with player sales.

A member of the Sao Paulo side that reached Libertadores semi-finals in 2016, Mendes found life tough in France at first. The coach who championed his arrival, Marcelo Bielsa, lasted only a few months and for a considerable period the new midfielder found himself on a positional merry-go-round, used by incoming boss Christophe Galtier in many different roles, including left wing, right wing and as a number 10 before the switch last summer to a deep-lying controlling role.

"It took me some time to work out where he would be the most effective,"

YOUCEF ATAL

(Nice, Fra & Alg)
The full-back has impressed during his first season in Ligue 1, particularly with his attacking runs down the right flank. Reports suggest that he is being tracked by Tottenham Hotspur and Atletico Madrid among others.

ROBERT SKOV

(Copenhagen & Den)
Able to operate out on the flank or as the playmaker, he was recently called up to the senior Denmark squad and has been watched by a host of Premier League teams after an impressive first year in Copenhagen.

says Galtier. "It wasn't obvious. I finally realised he could perform the same sort of job as Juninho used to do at Lyon.

"He needs to have the game in front of him. He's a personality and someone with whom I can exchange ideas. He really thinks about the game."

Nick Bidwell

ERAY COMERT

(Basle & Swi)
Centre-half who was born in Basle and is the Swiss under-21 captain, though he is of Turkish descent and could still change allegiance. Has yet to agree a new contract with his club, sparking talk of interest from Arsenal and Everton.

MARCAO

(Galatasaray, Tur & Bra)
The centre-back only moved to Turkey in January from Portuguese club Chaves but there is already talk of hard-up Gala turning a profit on their €4m investment by selling him on while he still has three years to run on his contract.

GONCALO CARDOSO

(Boavista & Por)
The teenage central defender has enjoyed an impressive breakthrough season in Portugal, prompting talk of a step up from the national under-19 side to the senior set-up. Watford, Internazionale and Lazio are among the clubs looking to sign him.

SAUL NIGUEZ

(Atletico Madrid & Spa)
An Atletico fixture since his debut at 17 in 2012, he is contracted until 2026 but rumours persist of a move. Only the very biggest clubs will have the resources to meet his reported €150m buyout clause.

FERNANDO MUSLERA

(Galatasaray, Tur & Uru)
The experienced keeper, who has been capped more than 100 times by his country, has been in Turkey since 2011 but has been repeatedly linked with a move to Paris Saint-Germain by the Turkish media.

EDIN DZEKO

(Roma, Ita & Bos)
Now aged 33, the striker has one more year left on his Roma contract and the club appear indifferent over any extension. Options include rejoining Manuel Pellegrini at West Ham United and replacing Manuel Icardi at Internazionale.

MARTIN DUBRAVKA

(Newcastle United, Eng & Slk)
The custodian has been one of Rafa Benitez's most astute signings for Newcastle but his form since moving from Sparta Prague in 2018 has alerted some big names, with Juventus keen to bolster their keeper options.

MATS HUMMELS

(Bayern Munich & Ger)
With a planned defensive reboot this summer which will be built around Benjamin Pavard and record signing Lucas Hernandez, a move away from Munich could beckon for the World Cup winner, who is also surplus to requirements with the national side.

IVAN RAKITIC

(Barcelona, Spa & Cro)
The Croatian is arguably Barca's second-most important player but is entering the final two years of his contract and the club have no plans to extend the deal. PSG, whose bid was rejected last summer, may ask again.

REMI OUDIN

(Reims & Fra)
At Reims since he was 14, the left-footed attacker has been a key figure in the promoted club's rise in Ligue 1 this season. Still a raw prospect but Reims could find themselves fielding offers this summer. Happy to operate as a winger or a support striker.

DJENE DAKONAM

(Getafe, Spa & Tog)
The centre-back has been one of the cornerstones of his side's rise to the top four in La Liga. Interested clubs will have to pay a buyout clause reported to be north of €30m – not a bad return for a player who cost €2.5m from Sint-Truidense in 2016.

SAMUEL UMTITI

(Barcelona, Spa & Fra)
A regular starter in his first two seasons at Camp Nou, and with his reputation further enhanced by a string of fine performances as France won the 2018 World Cup, the 25-year-old centre-back seemed part of the Barca establishment.

But how quickly it has all turned sour. Sidelined for several months this term with a knee injury, he has been forced to watch compatriot Clement Lenglet step into the breach with aplomb. Since returning to the squad in February, Umtiti has mainly been on the bench – and he could become even more marginalised if Ajax defender Matthijs De Ligt arrives in the summer.

And if he has to start again elsewhere, a number of leading Premier League clubs, particularly Manchester United and Arsenal, will be keen to help out.

Umtiti needs to play. After a prolonged spell out he is palpably rusty – a state of affairs which was there for all to see in a recent 4-4 draw with Villarreal.

The word in Barcelona is that the club remain angry with him for insisting on non-surgical treatment for cartilage trouble in his left knee. Instead of taking the advice of club medics and going under the knife he made a stand, adamant that a holistic approach would serve him best.

He duly went to Qatar to work with specialists. The reason for his squeamishness? A complicated recovery from a knee operation during his formative years at Lyon.

Neither the club or media corps were impressed. "He has wasted a season," stormed a reporter from the *Mundo Deportivo* sports daily. And judging by the virulent criticism he has received in the local press of late, a move looks ever more likely.

> "He has wasted a season"
> **Sports daily *Mundo Deportivo***

"The easy thing would have been an operation," he told *L'Equipe* about his decision. "However, I'm not like that. Mentally I'm strong and I don't give up. Even when the going is tough, which it was. Yes, there were times when I should have relented and had the operation.

"But I held out. I was fortunate to have good people around me."

Capped 29 times by France, the Cameroon-born Umtiti is still an automatic pick for *Les Bleus* and was on target in a 4-0 victory over Iceland in a Euro 2020 qualifier in Paris.

Having described the past few months as a "nightmare", maybe it's time for a change of scene.

Nick Bidwell

Glenn Moore

Tipping point?

Record-breaking attendances suggest that this could be a breakthrough year

In recent years, women's football has abounded with talk of tipping points and game-changers, with the sport seemingly forever on the cusp of making a great leap forward. In reality, progress has been a mix of other cliches, forever taking two steps forward and one backwards, encountering false dawns as it edges out of the shadows into which it was cast during decades of prohibition.

Nevertheless, while there has been no seismic moment of late to match the famous bra-top World Cup-winning celebration of USA's Brandi Chastain in 1999, the trend line has been surging upwards and 2019 is shaping up as a breakthrough year.

A World Cup always provides a boost but, more significantly, the club game is finally making waves by attracting fans, sponsors and media coverage.

This season, 60,739 people watched Barcelona beat Atletico Madrid in the Wanda Metropolitano, while 39,000 saw Juventus' victory over Fiorentina at the Allianz Stadium. Both were regular league games, and while tickets in Turin were free and either moderately priced or free to Atletico season-ticket holders in Madrid, the fact is more than 100,000 people still went to the two games.

Eniola Aluko, the former England striker who is now at Juventus, says: "It was absolutely incredible to see a full house. There were a lot of tears and emotion. A lot of these girls, particularly Italian girls, grew up never thinking this could happen."

The attendance in Spain was a record for a women's club match, eclipsing the estimated 53,000 at Goodison Park in 1920 to watch the legendary Dick, Kerr Ladies play St Helen's.

It was the success of the Dick, Kerr team, originally started by munitions workers from a Preston factory, that prompted the FA, fearful of competition, to ban women footballers from using men's club grounds and FA referees. The bar, soon followed elsewhere in Europe, lasted half a century and effectively drove the sport into obscurity.

A growing level of professionalism in recent years has resulted in greater depth with full-time players and more qualified coaches. There is also a wider sense that the sport's time has come. Governments see football as a way to improve female mental and physical well-being, while clubs and sponsors have realised it is both a cost-effective way of being seen to do "the right thing" and of attracting a new audience.

In significant developments, Barclays Bank and high-street pharmacy retailer Boots announced three-year £10million sponsorships, respectively of the FA Women's Super League [WSL], and the five British Isles national teams. In the USA, nutrition brand Luna Bar pledged to top-up the bonus awarded to Women's World Cup squad members by $31,250 to bring it on a par with the men in 2018. And while Nike revealed a series of women-specific kits for their World Cup teams in a glossy Paris launch, rivals adidas promised winners among their sponsored athletes would receive the same bonuses as their male equivalents.

However, as ever there are caveats. English fans, in particular, remain resistant. While the Wembley Women's FA Cup Final is capable of bringing in 40,000-plus attendances, last year's League Cup Final between Manchester City and Arsenal drew only 2,424.

The highest average gate in the WSL is at Chelsea, who attract around 2,000 to their Kingsmeadow ground but drew just 2,616 for a Champions League home tie with Paris Saint-Germain.

Spanish success appears to be based around heavy marketing and cross-promotion with the men's teams, and closer links to the latter certainly seems to be the future. In recent years Barcelona, Manchester City, Manchester United, Juventus, Milan, Bayern Munich and other giants have either begun new women's teams or professionalised what was previously an afterthought.

Piggybacking on the men's game may be the obvious way forward given the funds and fan base, but it is tough for those without the backing of wealthy men's clubs. In England, Yeovil – whose men's team are struggling to stay in the fourth tier – recently went into administration, having over-reached trying to meet WSL's full-time requirements. This drew a points deduction which effectively relegates

Impressive... over 60,000 fans saw Atletico play Barcelona this year

> "It was absolutely incredible to see a full house. There were a lot of tears and emotion. A lot of these girls, particularly Italian girls, grew up never thinking this could happen" Juventus striker Eniola Aluko

Incredible...Eniola Aluko (right)

Support...Chelsea fans at Kingsmeadow

them. Fellow League Two club Notts County disbanded their WSL team two years ago.

England manager Phil Neville has called for WSL clubs to follow the lead of Atletico Madrid and Juventus, saying: "There are some [WSL] teams, the big teams, who have got to open their big stadiums and fill them."

Brighton & Hove Albion were first to respond and will stage their final match of the season, against Arsenal, at the men's 30,000-capacity AMEX Stadium. In the past such experiments have drawn moderate numbers, but there does seem a new mood and plenty will hope that the Seagulls succeed. WS

Round-up

LYON WIN FINAL REPEAT

In the UEFA Women's Champions League quarter-finals, holders Lyon beat Wolfsburg home and away in a repeat of the 2018 Final.

Having won 2-1 in France, Dzsenifer Marozsan scored early on in Germany to set the visitors up for a 4-2 win on the night as they chase a fourth successive title.

They will meet Chelsea in the semi-finals after the English champions beat Paris Saint-Germain. PSG wiped out Chelsea's 2-0 home win within an hour in the return, but in the 91st minute Norway's Maren Mjelde struck to give the away side a 3-2 aggregate win.

In the other half of the draw, Barcelona eased to a 4-0 victory over LSK Kvinner of Norway, while Bayern Munich followed a 1-1 draw in Prague with a 5-1 home win over Slavia.

The semi-finals are due to take place on April 20/21 and 27/28.

ARGENTINA SET TO START SEMI-PRO LEAGUE

In a dramatic shift in policy, the Argentine Football Association has announced plans for a semi-pro women's league with a minimum of eight professionals per club.

The federation will subsidise clubs to the tune of $3,000 a month and minimum wages are set at around $90 a week. Two years ago the national team went on strike as they were not receiving their $10-a-day expenses while on international duty. The sport was then largely ignored, but the national team attracted 11,500 to November's successful World Cup qualifying play-off.

Meanwhile, in Brazil, a broadcast deal for the domestic league has been agreed with social-media outlet Twitter.

Goal...Lyon's Lucy Bronze celebrates

NINE BID FOR WORLD CUP 2023

A joint Korean bid was the most eye-catching of a record nine submitted to host the 2023 World Cup. Japan also bid, along with Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, New Zealand and South Africa. The decision will be made in March 2020.

RECORD 155 NATIONS PLAYING

The spring FIFA women's rankings featured 155 nations, a new record. However, this still leaves 56 FIFA-recognised nations either without a women's team or one that has been inactive for at least 18 months.

PSG FANS SENT HOME

A group of Paris Saint-Germain fans were prevented from attending the Champions League tie at Chelsea after knives, knuckledusters and class A drugs were found on their coach.

PSG strongly defended their fans, stating there was "no justification" for the police action.

Barred...PSG fans

Going pro...Boca Juniors' Micaela Cabrera (left) and Daiana Gomes Fretes of Lanus

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Lonely...Zakarya Bergdich of Belenenses SAD (left) 68

Brazil

Warm-up...Flamengo are denied by Fluminense keeper Rodolfo in a state championship game

Preview

Cups will be given priority

League often takes second place

The calendar of Brazilian football is a constant battle to fit three litres into a bottle that can only hold two. Something has to give. With the games coming thick and fast, priorities need to be established – and the league pays the price.

Top of the wish-list is the Libertadores Cup, with the Sudamericana Cup less of a distraction until the closing stages. The domestic cup is also a very big attraction. There is plenty of prize money on offer and it is seen as a short cut to winning some major silverware, as opposed to the 38-game slog of the league.

As a consequence of all this, key players are often rested for league games – which clearly favours those clubs with the resources to maintain a squad with plenty of options.

Defending champions Palmeiras are a case in point. With wealthy sponsors and a successful new stadium, they went on a spending spree last year and appeared to have more players than they could use. But things suddenly made sense after Luiz Felipe Scolari was appointed coach.

He essentially divided the squad in two: one for cup games and one for the league. They fell short in the cups, their main priority, but put in a second half spurt to win the championship.

This has clearly been adopted as a model by their closest challengers last

KEY DATES

League starts
April 27, 2019
League ends
December 7, 2019

Cup started
February 5, 2019
Cup ends
September 11, 2019

Success...Palmeiras' Marcos Rocha (left) celebrates with Felipe Melo in this year's Libertadores Cup

season, Flamengo. With their finances in good order, they have spent plenty in the transfer market and brought in Abel Braga – an experienced, charismatic coach. Like Scolari, he is a physically imposing figure who will be expected to handle the egos in the dressing room. With more pace at the back and up front, Flamengo look much better equipped than they were in 2018. And for both them and Palmeiras, 2019 will be a flop if they fail to land a major title. The Libertadores is the dream – both have won it once before – but the league would be a satisfactory consolation.

The leading challenge to the two favourites may not come from their neighbours in the traditional strongholds of Sao Paulo and Rio, but from the two other big centres of the Brazilian game.

Last year, Internacional and Gremio from Porto Alegre finished third and fourth respectively. Still under Renato Portaluppi, Gremio's possession-based style has made them the most attractive team to watch over the past couple of years. Although they cannot call on the depth of resources of Palmeiras and Flamengo, it will be interesting to see whether they can sustain a challenge.

Internacional under Odair Hellman were a surprise last year, bouncing back well after a season in the second division. This year they have the Libertadores as an added distraction, and a title bid may be beyond them.

Cruzeiro from Belo Horizonte cannot be ruled out. Eighth place in 2018 might seem a disappointment, but the season was saved by triumph in the domestic cup and coach Mano Menezes has a squad deep enough to fight on multiple fronts. They can go into the campaign with a swagger of confidence – perhaps more so than their local rivals, Atletico Mineiro. A leaky defence left them down in sixth last year and the early indications are that Levir Culpi has not been able to improve matters.

Corinthians should avoid a repeat of last year's battle against relegation. Fabio

Victorious...Athletico Paranaense with the Sudamericana Cup last year

ONES TO WATCH

GABRIEL BARBOSA
(Flamengo)
Once seen as a future striker for the national side, his career blew off course in Europe, but he was the top scorer back in Brazil last year with Santos and is now at Flamengo.

CAIO HENRIQUE
(Fluminense)
Left-footed midfielder on loan from Atletico Madrid and the influence of Spanish football is obvious. He rarely wastes a pass and is already a key part of his new team.

BRUNO GUIMARAES
(Atheltico Paranaense)
Box-to-box central midfielder with lung power, talent and poise. Breaks up opposing attacks and also breaks into their penalty area with an eye for goal.

GUSTAVO
(Corinthians)
"Gusta-goal" is a burly centre-forward whose career found momentum last year in the second division on loan to Fortaleza, earning a recall to Corinthians this term.

JEAN PYERRE
(Gremio)
Another from the Gremio production line. Tall, elegant playmaker with a refined touch who is being brought along slowly but surely by coach Renato Portaluppi.

CAMPEONATO BRASILEIRO SERIE A 2019

1 Athletico Paranaense (Curitiba)
2 Atletico Mineiro (Belo Horizonte)
Cruzeiro
3 Avai (Florianopolis)
4 Bahia (Salvador)
5 Botafogo (Rio de Janeiro)
Flamengo
Fluminense
Vasco da Gama
6 Ceara (Fortaleza)
Fortaleza
7 Chapecoense (Chapeco)
8 Corinthians (Sao Paulo)
Palmeiras
Santos
Sao Paulo
9 CSA (Maceio)
10 Goias (Goiania)
11 Gremio (Porto Alegre)
Internacional

Carille, who led them to the title in 2017, has returned as coach and the team will hope to have rediscovered the knack of grinding out results. They also have more attacking options, but a title bid might be asking too much.

Once held up as an example of sound management, Sao Paulo are now in political turmoil and fifth place last year was better than anyone had a right to expect. Even so, it still led to coaches being sacked and assorted off-the-pitch turbulence. This year got off to a disastrous start with elimination from the Libertadores in the qualifying round and more sackings. Highly strung coach Cuca steps into a tough environment.

Santos have gone bold with their choice of coach: Argentina's Jorge Sampaoli. This is something of a battle for the soul of Brazilian football, where the prevalent model in recent times has been a cautious, counter-attacking game plan. Sampaoli takes a much more proactive approach, favouring an attacking style that runs risks but brings potential rewards. It will be fascinating to see whether the club has the resources – and the patience – to embark on the Sampaoli roller coaster.

Fernando Diniz will be aiming to do something similar, but on an even more restricted budget, with Fluminense. Some of the early signs have been encouraging, but anything higher than a mid-table finish would seem unlikely – and much the same applies to an illustrious pair of local rivals. Neither Ze Ricardo's Botafogo nor Alberto Valentim's Vasco da Gama have realistic title expectations.

Bold...Jorge Sampaoli

Winning last year's Sudamericana Cup has raised the profile of Athletico Paranaense, who are now widely seen as the newly appointed "13th big team". An ambitious club from Curitiba, they are well coached by the promising Thiago Nunes but might just be stretched to combine league commitments with a Libertadores campaign.

The other teams from the southern region are likely to spend the next few months looking anxiously over their shoulders. Chapecoense's annual battle against relegation has been a regular feature of the championship of late, while newly promoted Avai will be happy just to avoid dropping straight back to the second tier.

Also coming up from the second division are Goias, the sole representative of the central region of the country who are back in the top flight after three years. Mauricio Barbieri has the task of keeping the club up and maintaining their reputation for attractive football.

The remaining four clubs are from the north east, a region that finds it hard to make its size felt at national level.

Champions in 1988, Bahia finished 11th last year – their best season since the adoption of the league format a decade and a half ago. Enderson Moreira will hope to keep that momentum going.

Ceara just managed to stay up last year and an added incentive in this campaign is the presence of their local rivals, Fortaleza, promoted in style as second division champions under former international goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni. This is the first time that both have been in the top flight since 1993.

The final promoted side, CSA from Maceio, have been away for over 30 years. As recently as 2015 they were not even in the four national divisions. They have now become the first team to win three consecutive promotions. Leaping from fourth to first division in three years was a mighty achievement. Managing to hold on to their newly won status will be just as impressive. WS

Attacking options... Vagner Love of Corinthians

Winner...Rodriguinho (left) of last year's cup winners Cruzeiro

MARCH 15-APRIL 10, 2019

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Derby delight...Inter get the better of Milan

Friday March 15

CHINA: Italy's World Cup-winning captain in 2006, Fabio Cannavaro is put in charge of China's national team ahead of the China Cup.
FIFA: A 24-team Club World Cup, starting in 2021 and taking place from June to July in place of the Confederations Cup every four years, is approved by FIFA.
NEW ZEALAND: The goalkeeper for New Zealand's futsal team, Atta Elayyan, is one of 50 people killed in a terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch.
SPAIN: Sevilla sack coach Pablo Machin the day after they are knocked out of the Europa League by Slavia Prague, with director of football Joaquin Caparros taking over until the end of the season.

Saturday March 16

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Simba score in the 90th minute to beat AS Vita Club 2-1 and reach the quarter-finals. Al Ahly, Horoya, CS Constantine and Wydad also book places in the last eight, along with already qualified Esperance and Mamelodi Sundowns.
GERMANY: Marco Reus scores in injury time as Borussia Dortmund come from 2-1 down to beat Hertha Berlin 3-2.
MOLDOVA: Sheriff begin their title defence with a 1-0 win at home to Speranta Nisporeni.
SPAIN: Isco and Gareth Bale are on target as Real Madrid beat Celta Vigo 2-0 in Zinedine Zidane's first game back as coach. Atletico Madrid lose 2-0 at Athletic Bilbao.
USA: Wayne Rooney scores his first MLS hat-trick as DC United beat nine-man Real Salt Lake 5-0.

Sunday March 17

BELGIUM: Losing 3-0 at home to Waasland-Beveren, Standard Liege pull level with three goals in four minutes before going on to win 4-3.
ENGLAND: Brighton & Hove Albion beat Millwall on penalties and now play Manchester City in the semi-finals of the FA Cup. Watford will meet Wolverhampton Wanderers for a place in the Final.
FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain beat Marseille 3-1 and move 20 points clear at the top of Ligue 1.
GERMANY: James Rodriguez gets a hat-trick as Bayern Munich thrash Mainz 6-0.
GREECE: Panathinaikos' game at home to Olympiakos is abandoned after 70 minutes, with the visitors leading 1-0, following crowd trouble.
INDIA: Bengaluru win their first Indian Super League title, beating Goa 1-0 in the play-off Final.
ITALY: Juventus suffer their first Serie A defeat of the season losing 2-0 at Genoa. Internazionale move above city rivals Milan into third place with a 3-2 win in the derby.
MOROCCO: Despite winning 4-1 away to AS Otoho, holders Raja go out of the CAF Confederation Cup in the group stage.
RUSSIA: Premier League leaders Zenit are held to a 1-1 draw at Spartak Moscow.
SPAIN: Lionel Messi scores his 33rd hat-trick in La Liga as Barcelona win 4-1 at Real Betis.
USA: A crowd of 32,250 watch Cincinnati beat Portland Timbers 3-0 at Nippert Stadium in their first home game in MLS.

Success... Cincinnati celebrate a goal on their MLS home debut

Monday March 18

CAF: A request to move Liberia's African Nations Cup qualifier on Sunday away from the Democratic Republic of Congo because of concerns over the Ebola epidemic is rejected by CAF.
HOLLAND: Linked with a return to Arsenal, Marc Overmars signs a new contract to remain as Ajax's director of football until 2024.
SPAIN: Rayo Vallecano sack coach Michel after seven consecutive La Liga defeats left them second from bottom, six points from safety.

Tuesday March 19

ALBANIA: Lazio goalkeeper Thomas Strakosha is dropped from the national squad after missing his flight to Tirana from Italy.

Wednesday March 20

CAMEROON: The coach of top-flight side Yong Sports Academy of Bamenda, Emmanuel Ndoumbe Bosso is released after being kidnapped while driving to training the previous day.
GERMANY: RB Leipzig full-back

Lukas Klostermann makes his debut as Germany draw 1-1 in a friendly with Serbia.
ITALY: Igor Tudor returns as Udinese coach just hours after they dismiss Davide Nicola.
SPAIN: Paco Jemez returns to Rayo Vallecano less than three years after leaving the club when they were relegated from La Liga.
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Bert Van Marwijk is named coach and replaces Alberto Zaccheroni, who led UAE to the Asian Cup semi-finals in January.

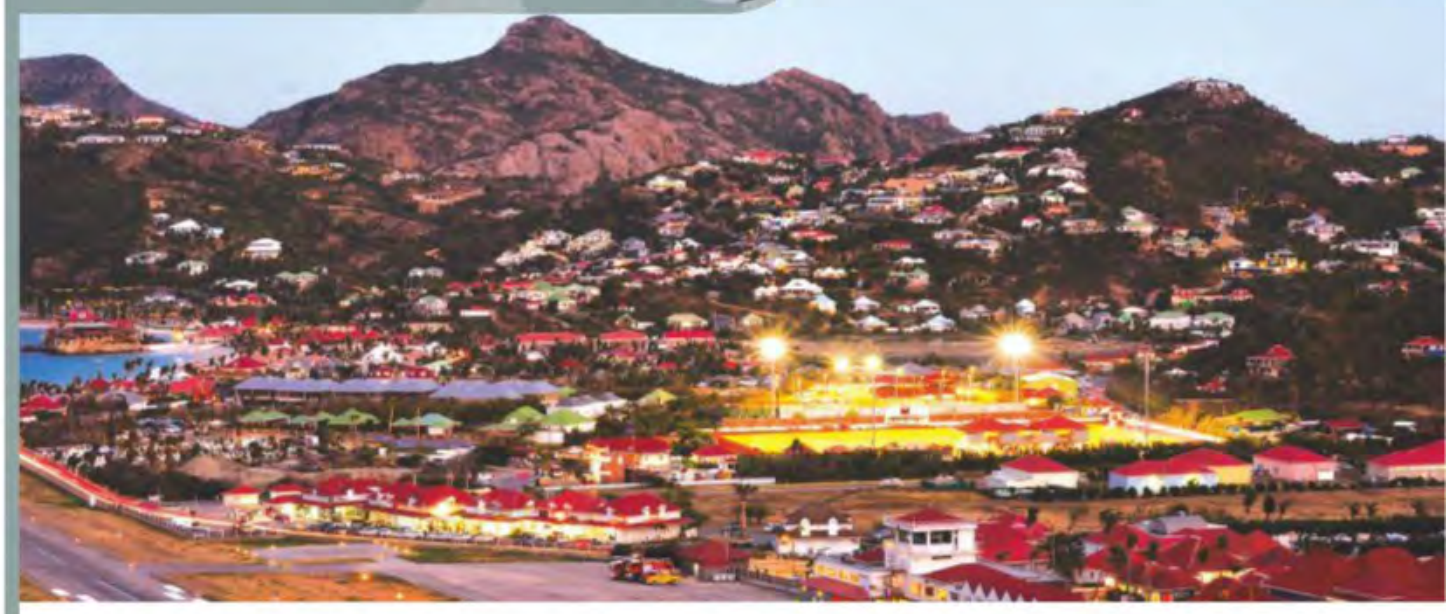
Thursday March 21

AFC: Mohammed Khalfan Al Rumaithi of the UAE pulls out of the race for the presidency of the Asian Football Confederation.
EURO QUALIFIERS: Youri Tielemans scores his first goal for Belgium as they beat Russia 3-1. Kazakhstan, who had won only one of their previous 20 qualifiers, beat Scotland 3-0, while Cyprus ➤

First goal...Youri Tielemans celebrates

Saint Barthelemy

STEVE MENARY



Impressive...Stade de Saint-Jean

Abramovich helps to rebuild local stadium

Chelsea owner puts money into the Caribbean game

While there is much debate in south-west London over whether Roman Abramovich is losing interest in football, there is plenty of evidence in the Caribbean that the Russian billionaire still loves the game. In 2010, he donated a reported €3million to help revamp the Stade de Saint-Jean on Saint Barthelemy, and he stepped in again to help rebuild it after Hurricane Irma devastated St Bart's in 2017.

"We have the huge chance and advantage of having a football fan who has one of the most beautiful homes on our island and is the owner of the Chelsea club," says Jeremy Merlet, a consultant for the Comite Territorial de Football de Saint-Barthelemy (CTFSB), which runs football on the island.

Like most of France's overseas possessions, St Bart's is a member of the French association and is also affiliated to the League of Guadeloupe, which is in the Caribbean Football Union (CFU) and CONCACAF but not FIFA.

In July last year the island staged a three-way tournament with two British overseas territories, losing 2-1 to Anguilla and 4-3 to the British Virgin Islands. The target for St Bart's now is to join the CFU and CONCACAF.

Tournament...St Bart's (in white) take on Anguilla

"This is the first time that members of the current CTFSB have expressed such a desire," adds Merlet. "We currently depend on the League of Guadeloupe, but we are seriously studying the opportunity to embark on the CONCACAF/CFU adventure.

"It's with this in mind that we are getting closer and closer to neighbouring islands which are full members of CONCACAF and CFU – to share their experience, to make our football known and convince people of the legitimacy of our approach and ambition."

"We wish, like our neighbours, to participate in larger competitions, locally, organised by the legitimate CONCACAF federation."

Merlet does, however, admit that St Bart's is "isolated" and dismisses the idea of participating in the World Cup as "ridiculous and unrealistic".

And there are some who also consider joining CONCACAF as a potential risk as it would expose St Bart's to more experienced opposition and the distinct possibility of heavy defeats. As Andy Bickerton, who is the president of the British Virgin Island's FA, explains: "There are so many things for young people to do today and losing matches by big scores does not help with retention."

Along with Saint Martin, Sint Martin and Anguilla, St Bart's have joined Bickerton in trying to resurrect the old Leeward Islands Football Association (LIFA).

Formed in 1949, the LIFA sporadically staged tournaments, but the last was in 2002. The latest idea would involve staging junior tournaments in order to give St Bart's comparable opponents as the island's association looks to take the next step up.

Domestically, five teams – Gustavia, ASPSB, Arawak, Diables Rouges and Team FWI – compete for the local championship on St Bart's. ASPSB, who are a Portuguese sports association based in the capital of Gustavia, are the island's most successful club, but they were pipped to the title last year by Arawak. WS

Portugal

TOM KUNDERT

The sorry tale of two clubs

Belenenses split in two

On September 23, one of Portugal's most storied football teams will be celebrating its centenary. But instead of commemorating 100 years of existence and a glorious past, Os Belenenses have lurched into an unprecedented crisis with no solution in sight. And it's a crisis that has, quite literally, split the club in two.

An ugly boardroom battle with increasingly vitriolic overtones resulted in the bizarre situation whereby this season kicked off with two separate incarnations of the team from Lisbon's chic Belem quarter. One is playing in Portugal's the sixth tier, attracting crowds of over 5,000 and rocketing towards promotion, the other is in Portugal's top flight, with no fixed abode and almost no fans, and yet is in with a shout of qualifying for Europe.

Belenenses is a club that was part of the very soul of Portuguese football, one of only two teams outside the traditional *Tres Grandes* of Benfica, Sporting and Porto to have won the championship, and the club which, apart from those three, has spent the most years in the top division.

Some of the greats of Portuguese football have donned the sky-blue shirt, including Mozambican-born Matateu, who enjoyed a fantastic career in the Portuguese capital. He famously insisted on drinking a beer during the half-time interval but that did not stop him scoring 220 goals in 280 games for the club. Were he alive today to witness the mayhem, one suspects he would be asking for something far stiffer than a beer to calm his nerves.

So how has an institution so steeped in history come to this?

In Portugal, major football clubs are obliged by law to be run by a sports-oriented public limited company, called a Sociedade Anonima Desportiva (SAD), to increase financial transparency. In 2012, Belenenses sold 51 per cent of its shares to Codecity Sports Management investment fund, with the football club retaining a buy-back clause to be exercised within two to five years.

A protocol was signed whereby the club yielded its badge, name and use of its Restelo stadium to Belenenses SAD. But relations soured so badly between the two parties that SAD reneged on its original intention to allow the club to buy back its share and by the time the protocol expired in June 2018 the two parties were at war.

Low key...Belenenses SAD host Porto in Jamor

Empty...Kikas celebrates scoring at home for Belenenses SAD

The team owned by Belenenses SAD was kicked out of the stadium and a new side was founded. But Belenenses SAD carried on regardless, continuing to use the club's name, kit and badge, training and staging its matches at the nearby Jamor stadium, a 10-minute drive from Restelo. Despite almost no squad investment, under the astute management of former player Silas the team has enjoyed a fine season, beating Braga away and taking four points from Benfica.

For the majority of the fans though, this is not the team with 100 years of history. Patrick Morais de Carvalho, president of the newly-formed Belenenses, speaks for many when he claims his club is the legitimate version, stating: "The results of the Codecity team mean nothing to me."

He went to court to prove his point and in October last year the Intellectual Property Tribunal ruled that Belenenses SAD could no longer use the name, badge or symbols of the original club. Sports media and the Portuguese FA were obliged to fall into line and replace the age-old "Belenenses" name in league tables and reports with "Belenenses SAD".

The supporters have largely turned their backs on

Starting over... Belenenses under-19 side train at Restelo stadium

the efforts of Silas' team, rendering the Jamor stadium a cavernous hollow of empty seats, in stark contrast to the impressive following that remained loyal to the new Belenenses. On January 7, when Estrela da Amadora hosted Belenenses, the kick-off had to be delayed to allow the huge crowd into the stadium and the encounter attracted more spectators than five of the nine fixtures in Portugal's top division that weekend.

"We are in a district division, but we are not a district team," says Carvalho.

But despite losing an appeal to reverse the court ruling, Belenenses SAD president Rui Pedro Soares is convinced he will still win the day, insisting: "This team is Belenenses, Restelo is the home of Belenenses, so it's inevitable we will return."

With both parties firmly entrenched in their positions, insults and accusations continue to be traded. In January, Soares accused Carvalho of "inciting hatred" after Belenenses barred any team affiliated with Belenenses SAD from using its facilities, bringing an under-16 game into doubt.

"We're talking about a training game for kids," said Soares. "This is going beyond all limits."

It's not exactly turning into a centenary year to remember. WS

➤ equal their biggest ever victory with a 5-0 win against San Marino.

ITALY: After a six-week exile, Mauro Icardi resumes training with Internazionale, along with team-mates that were not called up for international duty.

WALES: Bournemouth's David Brooks is named both player of the year and young player of the year at the FA of Wales Awards.

Friday March 22

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Angola clinch a place in the finals with a 1-0 win away to Botswana.

ARGENTINA: After a six-game absence, Lionel Messi makes a losing return to the international scene as Argentina are beaten 3-1 by Venezuela in Madrid.

EURO QUALIFIERS: Starting the defence of their European crown, Portugal fail to score at home for the first time in 19 games as they draw 0-0 with Ukraine.

Saturday March 23

ALBANIA: Christian Panucci is sacked following the previous night's 2-0 loss to Turkey.

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Defending champions Cameroon qualify for the finals by beating Comoros 3-0. Guinea-Bissau and Namibia also secure a place in Egypt, as do Burundi, who will make their finals debut.

EURO QUALIFIERS: Malta end a 30-game, 12-year wait for a Euro qualifying win by beating Faroe Islands 2-1. Edin Dzeko becomes the first Bosnian to win 100 caps in a 2-1 win against Armenia.

OMAN: Victory over Singapore on penalties in the Final sees Oman claim the inaugural Airmarine Cup.

Sunday March 24

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: A fan dies in a stampede before Zimbabwe's 2-0 victory over Congo, which seals their place at Egypt 2019. DR Congo, Benin, South Africa and Tanzania also qualify.

CONCACAF GOLD CUP: Bermuda beat Dominican Republic 3-1 to reach the finals for the first time, joining fellow debutants Guyana, who beat Belize 2-1. Haiti, Canada, Martinique, Curacao, Cuba, Jamaica, El Salvador and Nicaragua also secure qualification for the tournament over the weekend.

EURO QUALIFIERS: Nico Schulz scores a 90th-minute winner as Germany beat Holland 3-2, while World Cup finalists Croatia lose 2-1 in Hungary, for whom Balazs Dzsudzsak becomes only the third player to win 100 caps. Eden Hazard celebrates reaching the same mark for Belgium with a goal in a 2-0 win away to Cyprus. Eran Zahavi gets a hat-trick in Israel's 4-2 victory over Austria.

NEW ZEALAND: Team Wellington end Auckland City's unbeaten run of 30 games in the Premiership with a 3-1 win in the play-off semi-finals.

Monday March 25

EURO QUALIFIERS: England score five goals in consecutive games for the first time since 1984, winning 5-1 in Montenegro, while Kosovo take a point on their Euro qualifying debut with a 1-1 draw against Bulgaria. Olivier Giroud becomes France's third-top scorer of all time, getting his 35th international goal in a 4-0 victory over Iceland.

URUGUAY: Diego Godin becomes his country's most capped player, making his 126th appearance as Uruguay beat Thailand 4-0 in the Final to retain the China Cup.

Tuesday March 26

CLUB WORLD CUP: European Clubs Association chairman Andrea Agnelli says its members will boycott the revamped Club World Cup, but does not rule out a change of heart in the future if their needs are accommodated.

ENGLAND: European champions Germany end England Under-21s' 18-game unbeaten run with a 2-1 friendly win.

EURO QUALIFIERS: At 36 years and 54 days, Fabio Quagliarella is Italy's oldest scorer as they record their biggest win for almost 57 years, beating Liechtenstein 6-0. Trailing 3-0 to Switzerland after 84 minutes, Denmark come back to draw 3-3.

NIGERIA: Making his first start, Paul Onuachu scores inside 10 seconds to record Nigeria's fastest ever goal as they beat Egypt 1-0.

Wednesday March 27

ENGLAND: Gordon Taylor confirms that he will leave his role as chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, after 38 years, at the next AGM.

GERMANY: Bayern Munich agree to sign Lucas Hernandez from Atletico Madrid for a Bundesliga record fee of €80m on July 1.

Thursday March 28

ARGENTINA: Gonzalo Higuain announces his retirement from international football.

CONCACAF: Victor Montagliani ➤

➤ of Canada is returned for a second term as president of the North, Central American and Caribbean confederation.
ENGLAND: Manchester United appoint Ole Gunnar Solskjaer as their permanent manager on a three-year contract.

Friday March 29

AFC: Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa will govern Asian football for another four years after his final challenger for AFC presidency, Qatar's Saoud Al Mohannadi, withdraws his candidacy.
MOROCCO: Raja win the first CAF Super Cup to be staged outside Africa, beating Esperance of Tunisia 2-1 in Qatar.

Saturday March 30

BELARUS: BATE Borisov begin their quest for a 14th consecutive league title with a 2-0 win at home to Dnyapro Mogilev.
ENGLAND: Huddersfield Town are relegated from the Premier League with a 2-0 loss at Crystal Palace.
FRANCE: Strasbourg beat Guingamp on penalties, after a goalless 120 minutes, to win the League Cup for a fourth time.
GERMANY: Paco Alcacer scores twice in the last five minutes as Borussia Dortmund beat Wolfsburg 2-0 to go above Bayern Munich, who draw 1-1 at Freiburg. After six months and 20 games without a win in the Bundesliga, Nuremberg beat Augsburg 3-0.
PORTUGAL: Nearly four years after joining Benfica, Adel Taarabt makes his first-team debut as a 71st-minute substitute in a 1-0 win against Tondela.
SPAIN: Lionel Messi scores both goals as Barcelona beat Espanyol 2-0 in the Catalan derby.

Sunday March 31

ARGENTINA: Racing Club draw 1-1 with Tigre to secure the league title with a game to spare.
HOLLAND: Ten-man Ajax beat Eredivisie leaders PSV 3-1.
ITALY: Napoli win 4-1 at Roma, while Lazio are 1-0 winners away to Internazionale.
NEW ZEALAND: Callum McCowatt scores all three goals as Eastern Suburbs beat Team Wellington 3-0 to win the Premiership Play-off Grand Final.
NORWAY: Defending champions Rosenborg lose their opening game of the new campaign, going down 2-0 away to Bodo/Glimt.
SCOTLAND: Alfredo Morelos is sent off for the fifth time this ➤

Africa

MARK GLEESON

South Africa claim finals place

Line-up for Nations Cup in Egypt now complete

South Africa were the last country to book a place at this summer's African Nations Cup finals, holding on to win 2-1 "away" to Libya in Tunisia and salvage what has been a disappointing decade of results since they hosted the World Cup in 2010.

Going into the final weekend of Nations Cup qualifiers at the end of March there were 10 places yet to be filled in the 24-team field, with 21 countries still in with a chance – and a fair number of them looking to qualify for the first time.

In the end, tiny Burundi made it to the finals but Comoros Islands, Gambia and Lesotho did not.

Tanzania gained their place in emphatic fashion and will be competing in the finals for only the second time – and some 39 years since their debut.

Angola, Benin, Cameroon, DR Congo and Zimbabwe were among the expected qualifiers.

Most dramatic was the progress of Namibia who lost 4-1 away to Zambia in their last group game but still managed to qualify when Mozambique conceded an equaliser deep in stoppage time in their match against Guinea-Bissau.

Needing a victory for qualification, Mozambique fell behind early on in Bissau but rallied to equalise in the second half through Stanley Ratifio, who plays for CfR Pforzheim in the fifth tier of German football. Then, in the last minute of regulation time, they went ahead through substitute Nelson.

As Namibia were losing in Lusaka to bottom-placed Zambia, it meant Mozambique would top the group with Guinea-Bissau second. But sloppy defending at a set-piece four minutes into stoppage time ended the dream for coach Abel Xavier and his team as Frederic Mendy poked home an equaliser for a 2-2 draw to send Namibia through.

Burundi needed only to draw at home to Gabon, who had to win their last Group C game to usurp their hosts and had Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang back in the side. He, however, played a largely anonymous role as Burundi opened the scoring through Cedric Amissi. The hosts then had to go through an agonising last eight minutes after an own goal from Omar Ngandu gave Gabon hopes of stealing it late, before the final whistle went at 1-1.

Days later, Gabon coach Daniel Cousin was sacked.

Cameroon had little problem disposing of the Comoros Islands with Eric-Maxim Choupo-Moting, Christian Bassagog and

Through...Zimbabwe captain Knowledge Musona (left) celebrates

Winner...South Africa's Percy Tau (left)

Clinton Njie on target. Comoros had needed to win away to create what would have been one of the all-time upsets in Nations Cup history, but it was never realistically on the cards.

Lesotho needed to win in the Cape Verde Islands to write their own piece of history, and they were always in the hunt, but their dream ended as they ran out of time in a goalless draw.

That meant Tanzania were able to advance from Group L along with Uganda, who they beat 3-0 in Dar-es-Salaam. The country's president, John Pombe Magufuli, offered parcels of land to Tanzania's players and their coach Emmanuel Amunike in recognition of the team's achievement.

Benin went through by edging neighbours Togo 2-1 with Steve Mounie scoring a late winner.

Emmanuel Adebayor, who has played for Togo for some 15 years and proven to be their talisman time and again – including a surprise qualification for the 2006 World Cup in Germany – scored their goal but it was not enough.

"Today is the most important game of my life because it's the last one," he told his team-mates in the changing room after the defeat. "I had the chance to compete in some African Cup of Nations and a World Cup, and there is nothing more extraordinary than to play a Nations Cup. Unfortunately, we will not be here in 2019. But it's up to you to do everything and to bounce back, it's an obligation."

Angola qualified by winning away at Botswana with the only goal of the match in Francistown being scored on his debut by 28-year-old Wilson Eduardo, who has switched his international allegiance after winning caps at youth level for Portugal. He is the brother of Portugal international Joao Mario, who these days plays his club football in Italy with Internazionale

In Group G, Zimbabwe finished top by beating Congo 2-0 at home while DR Congo were runners-up after edging out Liberia with China-based Cedric Bakumbi scoring seven minutes into the second half in a nervy victory in Kinshasa.

South Africa played Libya on neutral turf in Sfax, where a large contingent of Libyans crossed the border to cheer on their team.

It was an intimidating atmosphere as the Libyans had to win while South Africa needed to hold out for a draw.

Percy Tau netted a stunning opener for South Africa but the lead lasted just minutes before Libya were awarded a penalty, which was successfully converted by Manchester-born Ali Benali. However, Tau came up with another sumptuous goal some 20 minutes from time to ensure progress for his side.

The tournament's 147 qualifying games produced a total of 350 goals and there will be nine former winners in the field for the finals from June 21-July 19 in Egypt – including the hosts, Algeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, DR Congo, Ghana, Morocco, Tunisia and South Africa. WS

➤ season as Rangers lose 2-1 away at Celtic.

Monday April 1

CROATIA: UEFA order Dinamo Zagreb to play their next home European match behind closed doors following racist behaviour by their fans during the Europa League game against Benfica on March 7.
ENGLAND: Former national-team manager Steve McClaren is sacked by Championship side Queens Park Rangers after just one win in 15 league games.
SOUTH AFRICA: Free State Stars winger Sinethemba Jantjie, who had agreed to join Bidvest Wits next season, is killed in a car accident.

Tuesday April 2

ECUADOR: LDU Quito's Cesar Mena is the first player to score two own goals in a Libertadores Cup game as his side draw 3-3 with San Jose in Bolivia.
ENGLAND: Fulham lose 4-1 at Watford and are relegated from the Premier League.
GERMANY: Dieter Hecking is informed that he will not be coach of Borussia Monchengladbach as of next season.
ITALY: Serie A will scrap Boxing Day football from its calendar as next season marks the return of a festive winter break.
SPAIN: Two-nil up in just over quarter of an hour, Barcelona trail Villarreal 4-2 going into the 90th minute but fight back to draw 4-4.

Wednesday April 3

ENGLAND: Tottenham Hotspur mark the opening of their new stadium with a 2-0 victory over Crystal Palace.
HOLLAND: Ajax end a 1,060-day wait to top the Eredivisie table by winning 5-2 away at Emmen.
MEXICO: Tigres beat Santos Laguna 3-0 in their CONCACAF Champions League semi-final home leg.
SPAIN: Real Madrid are beaten for the first time since the return of Zinedine Zidane as coach, losing 2-1 at Valencia.

Thursday April 4

ENGLAND: Wolverhampton Wanderers make Raul Jimenez's loan deal from Benfica permanent for a club record £32m.
MEXICO: Monterrey have one foot in the CONCACAF Champions League final after winning 5-0 against Sporting Kansas City in the first leg of their semi-final.
QATAR: Al Sadd clinch the title ➤

Argentina

JOEL RICHARDS

Racing are champions

Lopez leads his side to the title

In August 2018, Racing Club de Avellaneda crashed out of the Libertadores Cup, losing 3-0 to River Plate. "I have been here nearly three years and we haven't won anything," lamented captain Lisandro Lopez afterwards. Aged 36, this was to be the striker's last Libertadores campaign. Like many Argentina players, after a successful spell in Europe, he was winding down his career at the club where he started out and he had unfinished business. "It is time we started winning titles."

Fast forward seven months, the Racing captain lined up in the wall to defend a free-kick against Tigre in the league. He was in tears. His nearest team-mate consoled him. News had filtered through from the other side of Buenos Aires where Defensa y Justicia failed to win their game. It mattered little that Tigre equalised. Racing were champions.

Loved by Racing fans, respected by other clubs' supporters, skipper Lopez was the team's compass, the striker whose 17 goals made him the oldest top scorer in league history. Fifteen years previously he had been top scorer in the league with the club, but this year his goals helped lift the title.

Racing's checkered history, from bankruptcy and over three decades without a title, make it a unique story. So too supporters like Gabriel Aranda, who took his grandfather's skull to the title celebrations in the centre of Buenos Aires. "He would be proud," said Aranda.

While Racing were the best side in the country, Defensa y Justicia commendably pushed them to the penultimate round. "We celebrate second place," wrote the club on its social media account, going against the grain of the famous line from Carlos Bilardo that "nobody remembers the runners- up". "We value the dedication and effort of the squad. We are proud of this team."

As so often the case in Argentina, it is returning heroes whose experience proved vital. On the pitch for Racing it was Lopez; off it, it was former striker Diego Milito, who is now sporting director and oversaw a mini-revolution in running the club's scouting and business. Racing also found in Eduardo Coudet a coach who gauged the mood among the supporters and carved out a clear identity with which the team played.

On a high...Racing

Racing found in Eduardo Coudet a coach who gauged the mood among the supporters and carved out a clear identity with which the team played

Identity...Eduardo Coudet (in black)

Behind Racing and Defensa y Justicia were Boca Juniors and River, who were still recovering from last year's Libertadores Final.

The inflated league format – 26 teams, with points averages still deciding relegation – continues to pose problems. Meanwhile, six clubs went through three coaches each over the course of the season. Exequiel Carboni was particularly unlucky, ending a contract with two clubs: taking charge of Lanus for three match days, Argentinos Juniors for six. In addition, San Lorenzo and Huracan were deducted points for financial irregularities, with sanctions suspended awaiting appeal.

Belgrano, Tigre and the two clubs named San Martin – one from Tucuman, one from San Juan – were relegated. And while league directors consider altering the points-average system which decides relegation over three seasons, for now the controversial format remains in place. This leaves two historic clubs, Rosario Central and Newell's Old Boys already facing a relegation battle next season.

But first up – because the league does not allow a home-and-away format and because a single round of games leaves a several-month long gap in the calendar – comes the Superliga Cup. To give the new cup added value, with it comes Libertadores qualification. So, should one of the sides relegated this year win the cup, they would play in South America's premier tournament while playing in Argentina's second division.

While that may be unlikely, a re-run of last year's

acrimonious Libertadores Final between River and Boca is possible.

Argentinian football continues to conjure up complications and contradictions. And while fans continue to suffer, some get to celebrate. Few stories are as compelling as returning heroes inspiring and leading their club to glory. Juan Roman Riquleme at Boca, Juan Sebastian Veron at Estudiantes, Marcelo Gallardo at River, and Milito at Racing are just a few recent names. Lisandro Lopez at Racing now also enters the pantheon. WS

Season's best

On target... Lisandro Lopez

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Lisandro Lopez (Racing)
Racing's leader and the championship's top scorer.

COACH
Eduardo Coudet (Racing)
Joins Reinaldo Merlo and Diego Cocca as a title-winning coach at Racing in the last 50 years.

REVELATION
Matias Rojas (Defensa y Justicia)
The creative force in set-pieces for his side, the Paraguayan scored 10 goals for the eventual championship runners-up.

with a 7-2 victory over Al Ahli.

Friday April 5

ENGLAND: Liverpool come from behind to win 3-1 at Southampton and return to the top of the table, two points ahead of Manchester City, who have a game in hand.
FRANCE: Marseille, who have not won away to Bordeaux since 1977, lose 2-0.
MEXICO: Diego Maradona says he will quit his job as coach of Mexican second-tier side Dorados at the end of the season over perceived refereeing bias against his team.

Saturday April 6

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Record eight-times winners of the tournament, Al Ahly lose 5-0 away to South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns in the first leg of their quarter-final. In the other ties, Tunisia's Esperance won 3-2 in Algeria against CS Constantine, while Simba v TP Mazembe and Horoya v Wydad both finished goalless.
GERMANY: Bayern Munich thrash Borussia Dortmund 5-0 to leapfrog their opponents at the top of the Bundesliga with six games remaining.
SCOTLAND: Hibernian win at Tynecastle for the first time in six years, beating Hearts 2-1 in the Edinburgh derby. Hibs manager, Paul Heckingbottom, is yet to lose after eight league games in charge of the Scottish Premiership side.
SPAIN: Barcelona move 11 points clear at the top of La Liga with a 2-0 victory over second place Atletico Madrid, who had Diego Costa sent off in the first half.
USA: Wayne Rooney is sent off for a wild lunge with both feet off the ground as DC United lose 4-0 at home to Los Angeles.

Sunday April 7

ENGLAND: Second-half sub Gerard Deulofeu scores twice as Watford come from 2-0 down to beat Wolves 3-2 in extra-time and reach the FA Cup Final, where they meet Manchester City, who beat Brighton & Hove Albion 1-0 the previous day.
ITALY: Frosinone win consecutive top-flight games for the first time in their history with a 1-0 victory away at Fiorentina.
SERBIA: The referee, Milos Djordjic, takes the players off the pitch for 13 minutes following racist chanting by away fans in Partizan Belgrade's 3-2 loss away to Vojvodina.

Monday April 8

ALGERIA: Currently second in the league, JS Kabylie sack players Lyes Benyoucef and Juba Oukaci after they are arrested in the early hours of Saturday and handed two-month suspended jail sentences for possession of cocaine.

Tuesday April 9

COPA AMERICA: Argentina and Colombia are announced as hosts of a 2020 Copa America, which will feature north and south zones.
GERMANY: Augsburg sack coach Manuel Baum and his assistant Jens Lehmann and bring in former Mainz and Wolfsburg boss Martin Schmidt.
ITALY: Stefano Pioli stands down as coach of Fiorentina after their weekend defeat by lowly Frosinone leaves the side 10th in Serie A.
UEFA CHAMP LEAGUE: Hugo Lloris saves a penalty from Sergio Aguero as Tottenham Hotspur win 1-0 at home to Manchester City in their quarter-final first leg, while Liverpool beat visitors Porto 2-0.

On top...Bayern (in red) beat Dortmund

Wednesday April 10

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Tigres lose 3-2 away to fellow Mexican side Santos Laguna but reach the Final with a 5-3 aggregate victory.
GERMANY: RB Salzburg's Marco Rose will replace Dieter Hecking as Borussia Monchengladbach coach at the end of the season.
ITALY: Milan are referred to UEFA's financial regulator for breaking financial fairplay rules for the second year running. Fiorentina appointed Vincenzo Montella as coach for a second time.
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: An own goal by Manchester United's Luke Shaw gives Barcelona a 1-0 win at Old Trafford, while Ajax and Juventus draw 1-1 in Holland. WS

ESM XI

EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

HOW IT WORKS Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11

SEASON RANKINGS Cumulative votes through the season

GOALKEEPERS

Marc-Andre TER STEGEN (Barcelona)	17
Jan OBLAK (Atletico Madrid)	13
ALISSON (Liverpool)	11
EDERSON (Manchester City)	11
David DE GEA (Manchester United)	7
Wojciech SZCZESNY (Juventus)	5
Thibaut COURTOIS (Real Madrid)	4
Gianluigi DONNARUMMA (Milan)	3
Peter GULACSI (RB Leipzig)	2
Hugo LLORIS (Tottenham Hotspur)	2
NETO (Valencia)	2
Salvatore SIRIGU (Torino)	2
Kevin TRAPP (Paris Saint-Germain)	2
Roman BURKI (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Petr CECH (Arsenal)	1
Ralf FAHRMANN (Schalke)	1
Mike MAIGNAN (Lille)	1
Jordi MASIP (Real Valladolid)	1
Oier OLAZABAL (Levante)	1
Rui PATRICIO (Wolverhampton Wanderers)	1
Andrii PIATOV (Shakthar Donetsk)	1
Jordan PICKFORD (Everton)	1

DEFENDERS

Virgil VAN DIJK (Liverpool)	49
Jordi ALBA (Barcelona)	22
Gerard PIQUE (Barcelona)	22
Giorgio CHIELLINI (Juventus)	17
Leonardo BONUCCI (Juventus)	16
Joshua KIMMICH (Bayern Munich)	16
ALEX SANDRO (Juventus)	14
Joao CANCELO (Juventus)	13
Ashraf HAKIMI (Borussia Dortmund)	13
Kalidou KOULIBALY (Napoli)	10
Aymeric LAPORTE (Manchester City)	9
MARQUINHOS (Paris Saint-Germain)	8
Sergio RAMOS (Real Madrid)	8
Jose GIMENEZ (Atletico Madrid)	7
Thomas MEUNIER (Paris Saint-Germain)	7
Lukasz PISZCZEK (Borussia Dortmund)	7
Andrew ROBERTSON (Liverpool)	7
Kyle WALKER (Manchester City)	6
Trent ALEXANDER-ARNOLD (Liverpool)	4
Marcos ALONSO (Chelsea)	4
Juan BERNAT (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Diego GODIN (Atletico Madrid)	4
Thiago SILVA (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Manuel AKANJI (Borussia Dortmund)	3
Santiago ARIAS (Atletico Madrid)	3
DAVID LUIZ (Chelsea)	3
Matthijs DE LIGT (Ajax)	3
Eder MILITAO (Porto)	3
Milan SKRINIAR (Internazionale)	3
Jan VERTONGHEN (Tottenham Hotspur)	3
Leo DUBOIS (Lyon)	2
Nico ELVEDI (Borussia Monchengladbach)	2
Joe GOMEZ (Liverpool)	2
Marcel HALSTENBERG (RB Leipzig)	2
Makoto HASEBE (Eintracht Frankfurt)	2
Lucas HERNANDEZ (Atletico Madrid)	2
Thilo KEHRER (Paris Saint-Germain)	2
Vincent KOMPANY (Manchester City)	2
Victor LINDELOF (Manchester United)	2
MARCELO (Real Madrid)	2
Willy ORBAN (RB Leipzig)	2
Nicolas OTAMENDI (Manchester City)	2
Alessio ROMAGNOLI (Milan)	2
Nelson SEMEDO (Barcelona)	2
Sergi ROBERTO (Barcelona)	2
Alex TELLES (Porto)	2
David ALABA (Bayern Munich)	1
Daley BLIND (Ajax)	1
Dani CARVAJAL (Real Madrid)	1
Ben CHILWELL (Leicester City)	1
Danny DA COSTA (Eintracht Frankfurt)	1
Abdou DIALO (Borussia Dortmund)	1
FILIPE LUIS (Atletico Madrid)	1
Junior FIRPO (Real Betis)	1
Matthias GINTER (Borussia M'gladbach)	1
Mats HUMMELS (Bayern Munich)	1
Laurent KOSCIELNY (Arsenal)	1
Filip KOSTIC (Eintracht Frankfurt)	1
Kenny LALA (Strasbourg)	1
Dejan LOVREN (Liverpool)	1
MARCELO (Lyon)	1
Benjamin MENDY (Manchester City)	1
Ferland MENDY (Lyon)	1
Sokratis PAPASTATHOPOULOS (Arsenal)	1
Benjamin PAVARD (Stuttgart)	1
Daniele RUGANI (Juventus)	1
Nico SCHULZ (Hoffenheim)	1
Nicolas TAGLIAFICO (Ajax)	1
Omer TOPRAK (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Hamari TRAORE (Rennes)	1
Kieran TRIPPIER (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Aleksandr ZINCHENKO (Manchester City)	1

MIDFIELDERS

Eden HAZARD (Chelsea)	24
Paul POGBA (Manchester United)	23
Marco REUS (Borussia Dortmund)	17
David SILVA (Manchester City)	12
Leroy SANE (Manchester City)	11
Axel WITSEL (Borussia Dortmund)	11
Bernardo SILVA (Manchester City)	10
N'Golo KANTE (Chelsea)	8
Miralem PJANIC (Juventus)	8
Jadon SANCHO (Borussia Dortmund)	8
Leon GORETZKA (Bayern Munich)	7
FERNANDINHO (Manchester City)	6
Dusan TADIC (Ajax)	6
Julian BRANDT (Bayer Leverkusen)	5
Philippe COUTINHO (Barcelona)	5
Angel DI MARIA (Paris Saint-Germain)	5
Christian ERIKSEN (Tottenham Hotspur)	5
JORGINHO (Chelsea)	5
Ivan RAKITIC (Barcelona)	5
Bruno FERNANDES (Sporting)	4
Thorgan HAZARD (Borussia M'gladbach)	4
Nicolas PEPE (Lille)	4
Marco VERRATTI (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
ARTHUR (Barcelona)	3
Pablo SARABIA (Sevilla)	3
Nicolo ZANIOLO (Roma)	3
Rodrigo BETANCUR (Juventus)	2
Kevin DE BRUYNE (Manchester City)	2
Frenkie DE JONG (Ajax)	2
Thomas DELANEY (Borussia Dortmund)	2
Alejandro GOMEZ (Atalanta)	2
Ilkay GUNDOGAN (Mancheser City)	2
ISCO (Real Madrid)	2
Blaise MATUIDI (Juventus)	2
James MILNER (Liverpool)	2
Luka MODRIC (Real Madrid)	2
SAUL NIGUEZ (Atletico Madrid)	2
Cengiz UNDER (Roma)	2
Ever BANEGA (Sevilla)	1
Ross BARKLEY (Chelsea)	1
Federico BERNARDESCHI (Juventus)	1
Sergio BUSQUETS (Barcelona)	1
Emre CAN (Juventus)	1
CASEMIRO (Real Madrid)	1
DANILO (Porto)	1
Memphis DEPAY (Lyon)	1
Javairo DILROSUN (Hertha Berlin)	1
Julian DRAXLER (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Ondrej DUDA (Hertha Berlin)	1
FABINHO (Liverpool)	1
Andre GOMES (Everton)	1
Ander HERRERA (Manchester United)	1
Hector HERRERA (Porto)	1
JONY (Alaves)	1
Franck KESSIE (Milan)	1
Sami KHEDIRA (Juventus)	1
Thomas LEMAR (Atletico Madrid)	1
Giovani LO CELSO (Real Betis)	1
Riyad MAHREZ (Manchester City)	1
Javi MARTINEZ (Bayern Munich)	1
Gelson MARTINS (Monaco)	1
Jaime MATA (Getafe)	1
Sergej MILINKOVIC-SAVIC (Lazio)	1
Joao MOUTINHO (Wolves)	1
Jesus NAVAS (Sevilla)	1
Thomas PARTEY (Atletico Madrid)	1
PIZZI (Benfica)	1
Matteo POLITANO (Internazionale)	1
RODRI (Valencia)	1
James RODRIGUEZ (Bayern Munich)	1
Lucas TORREIRA (Arsenal)	1
Oliver TORRES (Porto)	1
Donny VAN DE BEEK (Ajax)	1
Georginio WIJNALDUM (Liverpool)	1
WILLIAN (Chelsea)	1
Granit XHAKA (Arsenal)	1

FORWARDS

Lionel MESSI (Barcelona)	62
Kylian MBAPPE (Paris Saint-Germain)	27
Cristiano RONALDO (Juventus)	27
Raheem STERLING (Manchester City)	21
Sergio AGUERO (Manchester City)	15
Krzysztof PIATEK (Genoa/Milan)	15
Paco ALCACER (Borussia Dortmund)	12
Mohamed SALAH (Liverpool)	11
Sadio MANE (Liverpool)	9
NEYMAR (Paris Saint-Germain)	8
Andre SILVA (Sevilla)	8
Fabio QUAGLIARELLA (Sampdoria)	7
Luis SUAREZ (Barcelona)	7
Duvan ZAPATA (Atalanta)	7
Pierre-Emerick AUBAMEYANG (Arsenal)	6
Mauro ICARDI (Internazionale)	6
Luka JOVIC (Eintracht Frankfurt)	5
Harry KANE (Tottenham Hotrspur)	4
Max KRUSE (Werder Bremen)	4
Hakim ZIYECH (Ajax)	4
Edinson CAVANI (Paris Saint-Germain)	3
Ousmane DEMBELE (Barcelona)	3
Robert LEWANDOWSKI (Bayern Munich)	3
Dries MERTENS (Napoli)	3
Karim BENZEMA (Real Madrid)	2
Lorenzo INSIGNE (Napoli)	2
Moise KEAN (Juventus)	2
Marcus RASHFORD (Manchester United)	2
ROBERTO FIRMINO (Liverpool)	2
SON Heung-min (Tottenham Hotspur)	2
Gareth BALE (Real Madrid)	1
Sebastien HALLER (Eintracht Frankfurt)	1
Gonzalo HIGUAIN (Chelsea)	1
Borja IGLESIAS (Espanyol)	1
Cristhian STUANI (Girona)	1

Prolific...Kylian Mbappe (far right)

Unstoppable ...Lionel Messi

Pos	Name	Goals	Factor	Points
1	**Lionel Messi** *(Barcelona)*	32	2	64
2	**Kylian Mbappe** *(Paris Saint-Germain)*	27	2	54
3	**Fabio Quagliarella** *(Sampdoria)*	21	2	42
4	**Krzysztof Piatek** *(Genoa/Milan)*	20	2	40

Pos	Name	Goals	Factor	Pts
5	**SERGIO AGUERO** *(Manchester City)*	19	2	34
	ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI *(Bayern Munich)*	19	2	38
	CRISTIANO RONALDO *(Juventus)*	19	2	38
	LUIS SUAREZ *(Barcelona)*	19	2	38
	DUVAN ZAPATA *(Atalanta)*	19	2	38
10	**NICOLAS PEPE** *(Lille)*	18	2	36
11	**MBAYE DIAGNE** *(Kasimpasa/Galatasaray)*	23	1.5	34.5
	ROBERT SKOV *(Copenhagen)*	23	1.5	34.5
13	**PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG** *(Arsenal)*	17	2	34
	EDINSON CAVANI *(Paris Saint-Germain)*	17	2	34
	HARRY KANE *(Tottenham Hotspur)*	17	2	34
	SADIO MANE *(Liverpool)*	17	2	34
	MOHAMED SALAH *(Liverpool)*	17	2	34
	CRISTHIAN STUANI *(Girona)*	17	2	34
19	**LUUK DE JONG** *(PSV)*	22	1.5	33
20	**PACO ALCACER** *(Borussia Dortmund)*	16	2	32
	LUKA JOVIC *(Eintracht Frankfurt)*	16	2	32
	ARKADIUSZ MILIK *(Napoli)*	16	2	32
	WISSAM BEN YEDDER *(Sevilla)*	16	2	32
24	**NIKOLAI KOMLICHENKO** *(Mlada Boleslav)*	21	1.5	31.5
25	**LILIU** *(Nomme Kalju)*	31	1	31
26	**ZAKARIA BEGLARISHVILI** *(Flora Tallinn)*	30	1	30
	PAULINHO *(Hacken)*	20	1.5	30
	YUSSUF POULSEN *(RB Leipzig)*	15	2	30
	MARCO REUS *(Borussia Dortmund)*	15	2	30
	MBWANE SAMATTA (GENK)	20	1.5	30
	RAHEEM STERLING *(Manchester City)*	15	2	30
	DUSAN TADIC *(Ajax)*	20	1.5	30
33	**PATRICK HOBAN** *(Dundalk)*	29	1	29
34	**ANDREAS SKOV OLSEN** *(Nordsjaelland)*	19	1.5	28.5
35	**KARIM BENZEMA** *(Real Madrid)*	14	2	28
	SEBASTIEN HALLER *(Eintracht Frankfurt)*	14	2	28
	ANDREJ KRAMARIC *(Hoffenheim)*	14	2	28
38	**ROMAN DEBELKO** *(Levadia Tallinn)*	27	1	27
	LINUS HALLENIUS *(Sundsvall)*	18	1.5	27

Veteran...Fabio Quagliarella

Pos	Name	Goals	Factor	Pts
	HAMDI HARBAOUI *(Zulte Waregem)*	18	1.5	27
	KAMIL WILCZEK *(Brondby)*	18	1.5	27
42	**FRANCESCO CAPUTO** *(Empoli)*	13	2	26
	ANTOINE GRIEZMANN *(Atletico Madrid)*	13	2	26
	EDEN HAZARD *(Chelsea)*	13	2	26
	CIRO IMMOBILE *(Lazio)*	13	2	26
	ALEXANDRE LACAZETTE *(Arsenal)*	13	2	26
	JAIME MATA *(Getafe)*	13	2	26
	NEYMAR *(Paris Saint-Germain)*	13	2	26
	FLORIAN THAUVIN *(Marseille)*	13	2	26
	JAMIE VARDY *(Leicester City)*	13	2	26
51	**IGOR ANGULO** *(Gornik Zabrze)*	17	1.5	25.5
	EFTHYMIOS KOULOURIS *(Atromitos)*	17	1.5	25.5
53	**IAGO ASPAS** *(Celta de Vigo)*	12	2	24
	CHARLES *(Eibar)*	12	2	24
	MUNAS DABBUR *(Red Bull Salzburg)*	12	2	24
	MOUSSA DEMBELE *(Lyon)*	12	2	24
	RADAMEL FALCAO *(Monaco)*	12	2	24
	ROBERTO FIRMINO *(Liverpool)*	12	2	24
	GUILLAUME HOARAU *(Young Boys)*	16	2	24
	BORJA IGLESIAS *(Espanyol)*	12	2	24
	RAUL JIMENEZ *(Wolverhampton Wanderers)*	12	2	24
	WAHBI KHAZRI *(Saint-Etienne)*	12	2	24
	ROMELU LUKAKU *(Manchester United)*	12	2	24
	JUNIOR MORAES *(Shakhtar Donetsk)*	16	1,5	24
	RICHARLISON *(Everton)*	12	2	24
	EMILIANO SALA *(Nantes)*	12	2	24
	HARIS SEFEROVIC *(Benfica)*	16	1,5	24
	GYLFI SIGURDSSON *(Everton)*	12	2	24
	RAUL DE TOMAS *(Rayo Vallecano)*	12	2	24
	GEORGE TUCUDEAN *(CFR Cluj1907)*	16	1,5	24
	KEVIN VOLLAND *(Bayer Leverkusen)*	12	2	24
	WOUT WEGHORST *(Wolfsburg)*	12	2	24
	TIMO WERNER *(RB Leipzig)*	12	2	24

(standings as 01.04.19)

Internationals

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS

Group A

Mar 22 - Sofia
Bulgaria 1 (Nedelev pen 82)
Montenegro 1 (Mugosa 50)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,652. **Ref:** Buquet (Fra)
Bulgaria: Mihaylov - S Popov, Bodurov, Bozhikov, Zanev, Kostadinov, Chochev (Slavchev 69), Nedelev, I Popov, Ivanov (Kostov 51), Delev (Minchev 82).
Montenegro: Petkovic - Marusic, Simic, Tomasevic, Stojkovic, Jankovic (Boljevic 64), Ivanic, Vukcevic, Vesovic (Jovovic 78), Mugosa (Kosovic 89), Beciraj.

Mar 22 - London
England 5 (Sterling 24, 62, 68, Kane pen 45+2, Kalas og 84)
Czech Republic 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 82,575. **Ref:** Dias (Por)
England: Pickford - Walker, Keane, Maguire, Chilwell, Henderson, Dier (Barkley 17), Alli (Rice 63), Sancho, Kane, Sterling (Hudson-Odoi 70).
Czech Republic: Pavlenka - Kaderabek, Celustka, Kalas, Novak, Soucek, Pavelka, Gebre Selassie, Darida (Masopust 67), Jankto (Vydra 46), Schick (Skoda 82).

Mar 25 - Pristina
Kosovo 1 (Zeneli 61)
Bulgaria 1 (Bozhikov 39)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 12,580. **Ref:** Mazeika (Lit)
Kosovo: Muric - Vojvoda, Rrahmani, Aliti, Kololli (Paqarada 78), H Kryeziu, Shala (Zhegrova 59), Rashica, Celina (Halimi 58), Zeneli, Muriqi.
Bulgaria: Mihaylov - S Popov, Bodurov, Bozhikov, Nedyalkov, Malinov (Minchev 76), Kostadinov (Antov 80), Nedelev, Slavchev, I Popov, Delev (Zanev 68).

Mar 25 - Podgorica
Montenegro 1 (Vesovic 17)
England 5 (Keane 30, Barkley 39, 59, Kane 71, Sterling 81)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 8,329. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)
Montenegro: Petkovic - Stojkovic, Savic, Simic (Jovovic 74), Tomasevic, Marusic, Ivanic, Vukcevic, Vesovic (Boljevic 70), Beciraj (Jankovic 61), Mugosa.
England: Pickford - Walker, Keane, Maguire, Rose, Barkley (Ward-Prowse 81), Rice, Alli (Henderson 64), Hudson-Odoi, Kane (Wilson 83), Sterling.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	2	2	0	0	10	1	6
Bulgaria	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Kosovo	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Montenegro	2	0	1	1	2	6	1
Czech Rep	1	0	0	1	0	5	0

Group B

Mar 22 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 2 (Barreiro 45, Rodrigues 55)
Lithuania 1 (Cernych 14)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 3,353. **Ref:** Reinshreiber (Isr)
Luxembourg: Moris - Jans, Chanot, Gerson, Carlson, Martins, V Thill (Turpel 78), Barreiro (Sinani 67), O Thill, Rodrigues, Da Mota (Bensi 58).
Lithuania: Setkus - Baravykas, Klimavicius, Jankauskas, Slavickas, Slivka, Kuklys, Petravicius (Valskis 61), Novikovas (Zulpa 56), Mikoliunas (Marazas 76), Cernych.

Mar 22 - Lisbon
Portugal 0
Ukraine 0
Att: 58,355. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Joao Cancelo, Pepe, Ruben Dias, Raphael Guerreiro, Ruben Neves (Rafa Silva 62), William Carvalho, Joao Moutinho (Joao Mario 87), Bernardo Silva, Andre Silva (Dyego Sousa 73), Cristiano Ronaldo.
Ukraine: Pyatov - Karavaev, Kryvtsov, Matviyenko, Mykolenko, Stepanenko, Marlos (Tsygankov 66), Zinchenko, Malinovskyi, Konoplyanka (Buyalskyi 87), Yaremchuk (Junior Moraes 76).

Mar 25 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 1 (Turpel 34)
Ukraine 2 (Tsygankov 40, Rodrigues og 90+3)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,653. **Ref:** Gestranius (Fin)
Luxembourg: Moris - Jans, Chanot, Malget, Carlson, Martins, V Thill (Bensi 74), Barreiro, O Thill (Mutsch 90+1), Rodrigues, Turpel.
Ukraine: Pyatov - Butko (Karavaev 79; Buyalskyi 87), Burda, Matviyenko, Mykolenko, Zinchenko, Tsygankov, Bezus (Yaremchuk 64), Malinovskyi, Konoplyanka, Junior Moraes.

Mar 25 - Lisbon
Portugal 1 (Danilo Pereira 42)
Serbia 1 (Tadic pen 7)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 50,342. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Joao Cancelo, Pepe, Ruben Dias, Raphael Guerreiro, Bernardo Silva, Danilo Pereira, William Carvalho, Rafa Silva (Goncalo Guedes 84), Dyego Sousa (Andre Silva 57), Cristiano Ronaldo (Pizzi 30).
Serbia: Dmitrovic - Rukavina, Spajic, Milenkovic, Mladenovic, Lazovic (Zivkovic 69), Maksimovic, Ljajic (Milinkovic-Savic 87), Gacinovic (Radonjic 21), Tadic, A Mitrovic.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Luxembourg	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Portugal	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Serbia	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Lithuania	1	0	0	1	1	2	0

Group C

Mar 21 - Rotterdam
Holland 4 (Depay 1, pen 55, Wijnaldum 21, Van Dijk 86)
Belarus 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 38,604. **Ref:** Massa (Ita)
Holland: Cillessen - Dumfries (Tete 68), De Ligt, Van Dijk, Blind, De Roon (Propper 46), F De Jong, Bergwijn, Wijnaldum, Babel (Promes 59), Depay.
Belarus: Gorbunov - Shitov, Martynovich, Sivakov, Polyakov, Maevski, Dragun (Laptev 86), Kovalev (Savitski 79), Putilo, Stasevich, Signevich (Saroka 63).

Mar 21 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 2 (McGinn 56, Davis pen 75)
Estonia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,176. **Ref:** Bebek (Cro)
Northern Ireland: Peacock-Farrell - Dallas, Cathcart, J Evans, Lewis, McNair, Davis, Saville, McGinn (McLaughlin 85), Lafferty (Magennis 76), Jones (Ferguson 81).
Estonia: Lepmets - Kams, Baranov, Vihmann, Tamm, Pikk, Anier (Zenjov 76), Dmitrijev (Sappinen 85), Mets, Ojamaa (Vassiljev 68), Kait.

Mar 24 - Amsterdam
Holland 2 (De Ligt 48, Depay 63)
Germany 3 (Sane 15, Gnabry 34, Schulz 90)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 51,694. **Ref:** Gil Manzano (Spa)
Holland: Cillessen - Dumfries, De Ligt, Van Dijk, Blind, De Roon (L De Jong 90+1), F De Jong, Wijnaldum, Babel (Bergwijn 46), Depay, Promes.
Germany: Neuer - Ginter, Sule, Rudiger, Kehrer, Kimmich, Kroos, Schulz, Goretzka (Gundogan 70), Gnabry (Reus 88), Sane.

Mar 24 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 2 (J Evans 30, Magennis 87)
Belarus 1 (Stasevich 33)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 18,188. **Ref:** Raczkowski (Pol)
Northern Ireland: Peacock-Farrell - Dallas, Cathcart, J Evans, Lewis, McNair, Davis, Saville, McGinn (Magennis 68), Lafferty (Boyce 79), Jones (Ferguson 85).
Belarus: Klimovich - Shitov (Polyakov 73), Martynovich, Sivakov, Volodko, Maevski, Dragun, Savitski (Nekhaychik 85), Hleb (Putilo 66), Stasevich, Laptev.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
N Ireland	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Germany	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Holland	2	1	0	1	6	3	3
Estonia	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Belarus	2	0	0	2	1	6	0

Group D

Mar 23 - Tbilisi
Georgia 0
Switzerland 2 (Zuber 56, Zakaria 80)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 49,207. **Ref:** Pawson (Eng)
Georgia: Loria - Kakabadze, Khocholava, Kashia, Tabidze (Kverkvelia 60), Gvilia, Kvekveskiri, Kankava, Qazaishvili, Kvilitaia (Lobzhanidze 74), Ananidze (Kacharava 84).
Switzerland: Sommer - Lichtsteiner, Schar, Akanji, Rodriguez, Zakaria, Xhaka, Freuler (Sow 90), Embolo (Steffen 84), Gavranovic (Ajeti 60), Zuber.

Mar 23 - Gibraltar
Gibraltar 0
Republic of Ireland 1 (Hendrick 49)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Papapetrou (Gre)
Gibraltar: Goldwin - Sergeant, R Chipolina, J Chipolina, Mascarenhas-Olivero, Annesley (Priestley 64), Casciaro, Walker, Bardon, Anthony Hernandez (Pons 77), De Barr.
Republic of Ireland: Randolph - Coleman, Duffy, Keogh, Stevens, Doherty (Brady 56), Hendrick, Hourihane, McClean, Maguire (Arter 72), McGoldrick.

Mar 26 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 1 (Hourihane 36)
Georgia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,317. **Ref:** Gozubuyuk (Hol)
Republic of Ireland: Randolph - Coleman, Duffy, Keogh, Stevens, Hendrick, Whelan, Hourihane, Brady (O'Brien 74), McGoldrick (Doherty 81), McClean.
Georgia: Loria - Kakabadze (Okriashvili 85), Kverkvelia, Kashia, Khocholava (Kharabadze 65), Kvekveskiri, Arveladze (Qazaishvili 73), Gvilia, Kankava, Kiteishvili, Kvilitaia.

Mar 26 - Basle
Switzerland 3 (Freuler 19, Xhaka 66, Embolo 76)
Denmark 3 (M Jorgensen 84, Gytkjaer 88, Dalsgaard 90+3)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 18,352. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Switzerland: Sommer - Elvedi, Akanji, Rodriguez (Benito 46), Mbabu, Zakaria, Xhaka (Sow 79), Freuler, Zuber, Embolo, Ajeti (Mehmedi 71).
Denmark: Schmeichel - Dalsgaard, Kjaer, M Jorgensen, J Larsen, Schone (Hojbjerg 70), Delaney, Poulsen, Eriksen, Braithwaite, N Jorgensen (Gytkjaer 70).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rep of Ireland	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Switzerland	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Denmark	1	0	1	0	3	3	1
Gibraltar	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Georgia	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group E

Mar 21 - Zagreb
Croatia 2 (Barisic 44, Kramaric 79)
Azerbaijan 1 (Sheydayev 19)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 23,146. **Ref:** Kabakov (Bul)
Croatia: Kalinic - Brekalo, Vida, Caleta-Car, Barisic, Modric (Badelj 90+1), Kovacic (Vlasic 73), Rakitic, Kramaric, Petkovic (Rebic 69), Perisic.
Azerbaijan: Agayev - Medvedev, Mammadov, Huseynov, Rahimov, Garayev (Dadashov 88), Madatov, Eddy, Richard Almeida (Mahmudov 72), Nazarov (Abdullayev 58), Sheydayev.

Mar 21 - Trnava
Slovakia 2 (Duda 42, Rusnak 85)
Hungary 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 14,235. **Ref:** Bezborodov (Rus)
Slovakia: Dubravka - Pekarik, Vavro, Skriniar, Hancko, Kucka, Lobotka, Rusnak (Mihalik 90+2), Hamsik, Mak (Stoch 79), Duda (Safranko 87).
Hungary: Gulacsi - Lang (Holender 81), Orban, Kadar, Korhut, Lovrencsics, A Nagy, Kalmar (Dzsudzsak 61), Kleinheisler (Szoboszlai 54), Kovacs, Szalai.

Mar 24 - Budapest
Hungary 2 (Szalai 34, Patkai 76)
Croatia 1 (Rebic 13)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 19,400. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Hungary: Gulacsi - Lovrencsics, Barath, Orban, Kadar, Patkai, A Nagy, Dzsudzsak (Bese 85), Szoboszlai (Kalmar 65), D Nagy (Varga 40), Szalai.
Croatia: Kalinic - Jedvaj (Petkovic 77), Lovren, Vida, Barisic (Leovac 30), Brozovic, Perisic, Modric, Rakitic, Kramaric, Rebic (Brekalo 67).

Mar 24 - Cardiff
Wales 1 (James 5)
Slovakia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 31,617. **Ref:** Zwayer (Ger)
Wales: Hennessey - C Roberts, Mepham, J Lawrence, B Davies, Wilson (Vaulks 87), Allen, Smith, James (Williams 72), Brooks (T Roberts 60), Bale.
Slovakia: Dubravka - Pekarik (Safranko 90), Vavro, Skriniar, Hancko, Kucka, Lobotka, Hamsik, Rusnak, Duda (Duris 65), Mak (Stoch 69).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slovakia	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Wales	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Hungary	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Croatia	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1	1	2	0

Group F

Mar 23 - Valletta
Malta 2 (Nwoko 13, Borg pen 77)
Faroe Islands 1 (Thomsen 90+8)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,531. **Ref:** Thorarinsson (Ice)
Malta: Bonello - Borg, Caruana, Agius, Mbong, R Muscat (Mintoff 84), Guillaumier, P Fenech, Corbalan (Z Muscat 63), Nwoko, Mifsud (Zerafa 71). *Sent off: Agius 62.*
Faroe Islands: Nielsen - Rolantsson, Gregersen, Faero, Davidsen, Vatnhamar (Bartalsstovu 68), Baldvinsson (Frederiksberg 79), B Olsen, R Joensen (K Olsen 72), Hansson, Thomsen.

Mar 23 - Valencia
Spain 2 (Rodrigo 16, Sergio Ramos pen 71)
Norway 1 (King pen 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 39,752. **Ref:** Treimanis (Lat)
Spain: De Gea - Jesus Navas, Sergio Ramos, Inigo Martinez, Jordi Alba, Dani Parejo (Rodri 76), Busquets, Dani Ceballos (Canales 74), Rodrigo, Morata (Jaime Mata 89), Marco Asensio.
Norway: Jarstein - Nordtveit, Elabdellaoui, Aleesami, Ajer, S Johansen (Kamara 77), Henriksen, Selnaes, Odegaard (M Elyounoussi 56), T Elyounoussi (Johnsen 55), King.

Mar 23 - Stockholm
Sweden 2 (Quaison 33, Claesson 40)
Romania 1 (Keseru 58)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 30,115. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)
Sweden: Olsen - Lustig (Krafth 24), Granqvist, Helander, Augustinsson, Claesson, Sebastian Larsson, K Olsson, Forsberg (Svensson 68), Berg, Quaison (Isak 88).
Romania: Tatarusanu - Manea, Sapunaru, Grigore, Bancu, Marin, Baluta (Ivan 78), Chipciu, Stanciu, Mitrita (Keseru 46), Puscas (Hagi 64).

Mar 26 - Valletta
Malta 0
Spain 2 (Morata 31, 73)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 16,542. **Ref:** Dallas (Sco)
Malta: Bonello - Borg, Caruana (Micallef 85), Z Muscat, Zerafa, Mintoff (Mifsud 69), Corbalan, Guillaumier, P Fenech, Mbong (R Muscat 65), Nwoko.
Spain: Kepa - Sergi Roberto, Sergio Ramos, Hermoso, Gaya, Canales, Rodri, Saul (Jesus Navas 65), Marco Asensio, Morata (Rodrigo 79), Bernat (Muniain 56).

Mar 26 - Oslo
Norway 3 (Johnsen 41, King 59, Kamara 90+7)
Sweden 3 (Claesson 70, Nordtveit og 86, Quaison 90+1)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 23,459. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)
Norway: Jarstein - Elabdellaoui, Nordtveit, Ajer, Aleesami, Odegaard, Selnaes, Henriksen, M Elyounoussi (Kamara 72), Johnsen (Sorloth 87), King.
Sweden: Olsen - Krafth, Granqvist, Helander, Augustinsson, Sebastian Larsson (Isak 62), K Olsson (Andersson 90+6), Ekdal (Svensson 66), Claesson, Berg, Quaison.

Mar 26 - Cluj-Napoca
Romania 4 (Deac 26, Keseru 29, 33, Puscas 63)
Faroe Islands 1 (Davidsen pen 40)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 10,502. **Ref:** Meler (Tur)
Romania: Tatarusanu - Benzar (Hagi 46), Moti, Grigore, Bancu, Deac, Stanciu (Man 78), Marin, Chipciu, Puscas, Keseru (Cicaldau 69).
Faroe Islands: Nielsen - Rolantsson, Gregersen, Faero, Davidsen, Bartalsstovu (Frederiksberg 67), Vatnsdal (Baldvinsson 28), B Olsen, R Joensen, Hansson (Vatnhamar 77), K Olsen.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP F	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Sweden	2	1	1	0	5	4	4
Romania	2	1	0	1	5	3	3
Malta	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Norway	2	0	1	1	4	5	1
Faroe Islands	2	0	0	2	2	6	0

Group G

Mar 21 - Vienna
Austria 0
Poland 1 (Piatek 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,400. **Ref:** Sidiropoulos (Gre)
Austria: Lindner - Lainer, Dragovic, Hinteregger, Wober, Lazaro (Janko 81), Baumgartlinger, Grillitsch (Onisiwo 84), Sabitzer, Alaba, Arnautovic.
Poland: Szczesny - Kedziora, Glik, Bednarek, Bereszynski, Grosicki (Pazdan 90+2), Klich, Krychowiak, Milik (Frankowski 46), Zielinski (Piatek 59), Lewandowski.

Mar 21 - Haifa
Israel 1 (Zahavi 55)
Slovenia 1 (Sporar 48)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,430. **Ref:** Martins (Por)
Israel: Harush - Dasa, Taha, Yeini, Ben Harush, Tawatha (Y Cohen 77), Peretz, Natcho (A Cohen 79), Kayal (Solomon 63), Zahavi, Dabbur.
Slovenia: Oblak - Stojanovic, Aljaz Struna, Mevlja, Jokic, Krhin, Kurtic, Verbic (Bijol 90), Ilicic, Sporar (Bohar 85), Zajc (Crnigoj 62).

Mar 21 - Skopje
Macedonia 3 (Alioski 11, Elmas 29, 90+3)
Latvia 1 (Velkovski og 87)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 7,043. **Ref:** Ozkahya (Tur)
Macedonia: Dimitrievski - Ristovski, Musliu, Velkovski, Alioski, Trajkovski (Markoski 83), Bardhi, Nikolov, Hasani (Elmas 23), Nestorovski, Pandev (Ristevski 71).
Latvia: Vanins (Steinbors 33) - Gabovs, Dubra, Oss, Maksimenko, Ciganiks, Tarasovs, Isajevs, Karasausks (Tobers 68), Rakels, Sabala (Uldrikis 79). *Sent off: Ciganiks 90+1.*

Mar 24 - Haifa
Israel 4 (Zahavi 34, 45, 55, Dabbur 66)
Austria 2 (Arnautovic 8, 75)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 16,180. **Ref:** Aranovskyi (Ukr)
Israel: Harush - Dasa, Taha (Habashi 77), Yeini, Dgani, Ben Harush, Kayal (A Cohen 72), Peretz, Natcho, Dabbur (Hemed 80), Zahavi.
Austria: Lindner - Lazaro, Dragovic, Hinteregger, Wober (Janko 60), Ulmer, Schlager (Onisiwo 61), Zulj (Kainz 85), Baumgartlinger, Sabitzer, Arnautovic.

Mar 24 - Warsaw
Poland 2 (Lewandowski 76, Glik 84)
Latvia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 51,112. **Ref:** Aghayev (Aze)
Poland: Szczesny - Kedziora, Glik, Pazdan, Reca, Grosicki (Frankowski 83), Krychowiak, Klich (Blaszczykowski 62), Zielinski, Piatek (Milik 87), Lewandowski.
Latvia: Steinbors - Savalnieks (Gabovs 80), Dubra, Oss, Maksimenko, Ikaunieks, Laizans, Isajevs, Rakels, Karasausks (Tobers 85), Gutkovskis (Uldrikis 70).

Mar 24 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 1 (Zajc 34)
Macedonia 1 (Bardhi 47)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 9,872. **Ref:** Estrada Fernandez (Spa)
Slovenia: Oblak - Stojanovic, Aljaz Struna, Mevlja, Jokic, Zajc (Zahovic 90), Krhin, Kurtic, Ilicic, Sporar (Beric 71), Verbic (Crnigoj 84).
Macedonia: Dimitrievski - Bejtulai, Velkovski, Musliu, Ristovski, Bardhi, Nikolov, Elmas, Alioski (Ristevski 90+3), Pandev (Trajkovski 76), Nestorovski (Markoski 88).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP G	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Poland	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Israel	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Macedonia	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Slovenia	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Austria	2	0	0	2	2	5	0
Latvia	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

Group H

Mar 22 - Shkoder
Albania 0
Turkey 2 (Burak 21, Calhanoglu 55)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 11,730. **Ref:** Stieler (Ger)
Albania: Berisha - Hysaj, Ismajli, Gjimshiti, Veseli, Balliu (Sadiku 58), Abrashi, Xhaka, Memushaj, Balaj (Grezda 58), Uzuni.
Turkey: Mert - Gokhan (Mehmet Celik 46), Ayhan, Merih, Kaldirim, Mahmut, Okay, Emre Belozoglu (Dorukhan 65), Tosun, Burak (Turuc 88), Calhanoglu.

Mar 22 - Andorra la Vella
Andorra 0
Iceland 2 (B Bjarnason 22, Kjartansson 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,854. **Ref:** Scharer (Swi)
Andorra: Gomes - Rubio (J Sanchez 87), Llovera, Lima, San Nicolas, A Martinez (Alaez 71), Rebes, Vales, Cervos, C Martinez (Clemente 81), Vieira.
Iceland: Halldorsson - Saevarsson, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, Skulason, J Gudmundsson (Traustason 83), Gunnarsson (Sigurjonsson 63), B Bjarnason, A Sigurdsson, G Sigurdsson, Finnbogason (Kjartansson 70).

Mar 22 - Chisinau
Moldova 1 (Ambros 89)
France 4 (Griezmann 24, Varane 27, Giroud 36, Mbappe 87)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 10,042. **Ref:** Stavrev (Mac)
Moldova: Koselev - Jardan, Posmac, Carp, Reabciuk, Antoniuc (Ambros 73), Cebotaru, Cociuc (Rozgoniuc 46), Ionita, Ginsari, Nicolaescu (Damascan 59).
France: Lloris - Pavard, Varane, Umtiti, Kurzawa, Kante, Pogba, Mbappe, Griezmann (Lemar 73), Matuidi (Thauvin 73), Giroud (Fekir 81).

Mar 25 - Andorra la Vella
Andorra 0
Albania 3 (Sadiku 21, Balaj 87, Abrashi 90+6)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,373. **Ref:** Glova (Slk)
Andorra: Gomes - Rubio, Llovera, Lima, San Nicolas, Rodriguez, Rebes, Vales (Pujol 84), Clemente (Cervos 67), Vieira, C Martinez (Alaez 74).
Albania: Berisha - Hysaj, Ismajli, Gjimshiti, Aliji, Kace, Basha (Memushaj 87), Xhaka (Abrashi 67), Uzuni, Sadiku, Grezda (Balaj 70).

Mar 25 - Paris
France 4 (Umtiti 12, Giroud 68, Mbappe 78, Griezmann 84)
Iceland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 64,538. **Ref:** Kovacs (Rom)
France: Lloris - Pavard, Varane, Umtiti, Kurzawa (Kimpembe 85), Pogba, Kante (Lemar 80), Mbappe, Griezmann, Matuidi, Giroud (Sissoko 90).
Iceland: Halldorsson - Saevarsson (Skulason 84), Ingason, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, Magnusson, Sigurjonsson (Traustason 57), Gunnarsson, B Bjarnason, G Sigurdsson, A Gudmundsson (Finnbogason 62).

Mar 25 - Eskisehir
Turkey 4 (Kaldirim 24, Tosun 26, 53, Ayhan 70)
Moldova 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 29,456. **Ref:** Boiko (Ukr)
Turkey: Mert - Mehmet Celik, Ayhan, Merih, Kaldirim, Dorukhan (Emre Belozoglu 84), Mahmut, Turuc (Efecan 78), Calhanoglu (Yusuf 66), Tosun, Burak.
Moldova: Koselev - Jardan, Posmac, Rozgoniuc, Reabciuk, Graur, Cebotaru, Carp (Turcan 46), Ginsari (Antoniuc 73), Ionita, Ambros (Nicolaescu 57).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP H	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Turkey	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
Albania	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Iceland	2	1	0	1	2	4	3
Andorra	2	0	0	2	0	5	0
Moldova	2	0	0	2	1	8	0

Group I

Mar 21 - Brussels
Belgium 3 (Tielemans 14, E Hazard pen 45, 88)
Russia 1 (Cheryshev 16)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 34,245. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Boyata, Vertonghen, Castagne, Tielemans, Dendoncker, T Hazard (Chadli 84), Mertens, E Hazard, Batshuayi.
Russia: Guilherme - Fernandes, Nababkin, Kudryashov, Dzhikiya, Zhirkov, Akhmetov, Golovin, Kuzyaev (Anton Miranchuk 26), Cheryshev (Chalov 64), Dzyuba (Smolov 77). *Sent off: Golovin 90.*

Mar 21 - Nicosia
Cyprus 5 (Sotiriou pen 19, pen 23, Kousoulos 26, Efrem 31, Laifis 56)
San Marino 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 3,175. **Ref:** Frischer (Est)
Cyprus: Panayi - Demetriou (Merkis 65), Kousoulos, Laifis, Ioannou, Georgiou, Papoulis (Spoljaric 54), Artymatas, Efrem, Mytidis, Sotiriou (Makris 27).
San Marino: E Benedettini - Manuel Battistini, Cevoli, Simoncini, Palazzi, Rinaldi (Hirsch 46), Giardi (Lunadei 74), E Golinucci, Mularoni, Berardi, Nanni (Vitaioli 46).

Mar 21 - Astana
Kazakhstan 3 (Pertsukh 6, Vorogovskiy 10, Zainutdinov 51)
Scotland 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 27,641. **Ref:** Jovanovic (Ser)
Kazakhstan: Nepohodov - Erlanov (Akhmetov 81), Postnikov, Maliy, Vorogovskiy, Pertsukh, Kuat, Merkel, Suyumbayev, Zainutdinov (Muzhikov 84), Murtazayev (Turysbek 68).
Scotland: Bain - Palmer, Bates, McKenna, Shinnie, McGinn (McTominay 70), C McGregor, Armstrong, Forrest (McNulty 81), McBurnie (Russell 61), Burke.

Mar 24 - Nicosia
Cyprus 0
Belgium 2 (E Hazard 10, Batshuayi 18)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 8,728. **Ref:** Letexier (Fra)
Cyprus: Pardo - Kousoulos, Dossa Junior (Georgiou 46), Merkis, Laifis, Ioannou, Papoulis, Artymatas, Margaca, Antoniou (Makris 81), Efrem (Spoljaric 75).
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Vermaelen, Vertonghen, Castagne, Tielemans, Dendoncker, T Hazard (Carrasco 68), Mertens (Januzaj 56), E Hazard, Batshuayi (Praet 89).

Mar 24 - Astana
Kazakhstan 0
Russia 4 (Cheryshev 19, 45+2, Dzyuba 52, Beisebekov og 62)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 29,582. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)
Kazakhstan: Nepohodov - Beisebekov, Akhmetov, Maliy, Logvinenko (Vorogovskiy 30), Suyumbayev, Pertsukh (Zhukov 85), Kuat, Merkel, Murtazayev (Turysbek 59), Zainutdinov.
Russia: Guilherme - Fernandes, Semenov, Dzhikiya, Kudryashov, Ozdoev, Gazinsky, Ionov (Ignatyev 61), Akhmetov (Aleksei Miranchuk 72), Cheryshev, Dzyuba (Chalov 82).

Mar 24 - Serravalle
San Marino 0
Scotland 2 (McLean 4, Russell 74)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,077. **Ref:** Schuttengruber (Aut)
San Marino: E Benedettini - Manuel Battistini, Cevoli, Simoncini (Lunadei 86), Palazzi, Berardi, Mularoni, E Golinucci, A Golinucci, Hirsch (Grandoni 77), Vitaioli (Nanni 60).
Scotland: Bain - O'Donnell, Bates, McKenna, Robertson, McLean, C McGregor (McTominay 56), Russell, Armstrong (Forrest 71), Fraser, Paterson (McNulty 37).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP I	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belgium	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Russia	2	1	0	1	5	3	3
Kazakhstan	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Cyprus	2	1	0	1	5	2	3
Scotland	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
San Marino	2	0	0	2	0	7	0

Group J

Mar 23 - Sarajevo
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Krunic 33, Milosevic 80)
Armenia 1 (Mkhitaryan pen 90+3)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Kehlet (Den)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sehic - Todorovic, Bicakcic, Zukanovic, Civic, Pjanic, Besic, Krunic (Gojak 82), Visca, Dzeko (Koljic 87), Zakaric (Milosevic 65).
Armenia: Hayrapetyan - Hovhannisyan, Haroyan, Calisir, Daghbashyan, Grigoryan, Mkrtchyan, Adamyan (Babayan 67), Mkhitaryan, Ghazaryan (Ozbiliz 81), Karapetyan (Briasco 67).

Mar 23 - Udine
Italy 2 (Barella 7, Kean 74)
Finland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 24,000. **Ref:** Grinfeld (Isr)
Italy: Donnarumma - Piccini, Bonucci, Chiellini, Biraghi (Spinazzola 90+1), Verratti (Zaniolo 85), Jorginho, Bernardeschi, Barella, Kean, Immobile (Quagliarella 80).
Finland: Hradecky - Granlund (Soiri 90), Toivio, Arajuuri, S Vaisanen, Pirinen, Lod, Kamara, Sparv, Pukki (Karjalainen 83), Hamalainen (Lappalainen 70).

Mar 23 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Greece 2 (Fortounis 45+1, Donis 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,711. **Ref:** Boucaut (Blg)
Liechtenstein: B Buchel - S Wolfinger, Kaufmann, Goppel, Rechsteiner, Wieser, Hasler (Frick 86), Polverino, M Buchel (Sele 67), Salanovic, Gubser (Yildiz 76).
Greece: Vlachodimos - Bakakis, Kourbelis, Siovas, Koutris, Zeca, Samaris, Bakasetas (Kolovos 71), Fortounis (Koulouris 83), Masouras, Mitroglou (Donis 23).

Mar 26 - Yerevan
Armenia 0
Finland 2 (Jensen 14, Soiri 78)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 12,900. **Ref:** Dabanovic (Mne)
Armenia: Hayrapetyan - Hovhannisyan, Haroyan, Calisir, Daghbashyan, Ozbiliz (Barseghyan 67), Mkhitaryan, Grigoryan, Babayan (Avetisyan 74), Ghazaryan, Briasco (Karapetyan 59).
Finland: Hradecky - Granlund, Toivio, Arajuuri, Pirinen, Lod (Taylor 87), Kamara, Sparv, Hamalainen (Soiri 57), Pukki, Jensen (Schuller 69).

Mar 26 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Visca 10, Pjanic 15)
Greece 2 (Fortounis pen 64, Kolovos 85)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,500. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sehic - Bicakcic, Sunjic, Zukanovic, Kolasinac, Pjanic, Besic, Cimirot (Krunic 90+3), Visca, Dzeko (Gojak 90), Duljevic (Milosevic 80). *Sent off: Pjanic 65.*
Greece: Vlachodimos - Kourbelis (Kolovos 67), Papastathopoulos, Siovas, Bakakis (Koulouris 80), Samaris, Bouchalakis (Masouras 46), Koutris, Zeca, Fortounis, Donis.

Mar 26 - Parma
Italy 6 (Sensi 17, Verratti 32, Quagliarella pen 35, pen 45+3, Kean 69, Pavoletti 76)
Liechtenstein 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 19,834. **Ref:** Levnikov (Rus)
Italy: Sirigu - Mancini, Bonucci (Izzo 79), Romagnoli, Spinazzola, Sensi, Jorginho (Zaniolo 57), Verratti, Politano, Quagliarella (Pavoletti 72), Kean.
Liechtenstein: B Buchel - S Wolfinger, Kaufmann, Hofer, Goppel, Sele (Malin 46), Polverino, Wieser, Kuhne (Meier 68), Hasler, Salanovic (M Buchel 82). *Sent off: Kaufmann 45+2.*

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP J	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	2	2	0	0	8	0	6
Greece	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Bosnia-Herz	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Finland	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Armenia	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
Liechtenstein	2	0	0	2	0	8	0

Remaining matchdays (all 2019): *Jun 7/8, Jun 10/11, Sep 5-7, Sep 8-10, Oct10-12, Oct13-15, Nov14-16, Nov17-19 (teams in groups of 5 will play a total of 8 games each; teams in groups of 6 will play a total of10 games each)*

● *The top 2 in each of the10 groups will qualify for the 24-team Euro 2020 (European Championship) finals; the 4 remaining finals places will be taken by the winners of the 4 UEFA Nations League play-off finals (1 for each of the leagues, A, B, C & D)*

2019 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS

Group A

Mar 22 - Omdurman
Sudan 1 (Seifeldin 15)
Equatorial Guinea 4 (Nsue pen 19, pen 36, Ganet 49, Obiang 85)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Toure (Gui)

Mar 23 - Thies
Senegal 2 (Niang 27, 56)
Madagascar 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Essrayri (Tun)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP A – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal (QF)	6	5	1	0	12	2	16
Madag'car (QF)	6	3	1	2	8	8	10
Equat Guinea	6	2	0	4	5	7	6
Sudan	6	1	0	5	5	13	3

Group B

Mar 22 - Lilongwe
Malawi 0
Morocco 0
Ref: Martins de Carvalho (Ang)

Mar 23 - Yaounde
Cameroon 3 (Choupo-Moting 37, Bassogog 52, N'Jie 88)
Comoros 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Gassama (Gam)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP B – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco (QF)	6	3	2	1	8	3	11
Cameroon (QF)	6	3	2	1	6	3	11
Malawi	6	1	2	3	2	6	5
Comoros	6	1	2	3	5	9	5

Group C

Mar 23 - Bujumbura
Burundi 1 (Amissi 76)
Gabon 1 (Ngando og 82)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Grisha (Egy)

Mar 23 - Bamako
Mali 3 (K Coulibaly 18, Djenepo 28, Adama Traore/F 90)
South Sudan 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Muhabi (Uga)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP C – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mali (QF)	6	4	2	0	10	2	14
Burundi (QF)	6	2	4	0	11	5	10
Gabon	6	2	2	2	7	5	8
South Sudan	6	0	0	6	2	18	0

Group D

Mar 22 - Blida
Algeria 1 (Abeid 42)
Gambia 1 (Danso 90+2)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Alioum (Cam)

Mar 24 - Cotonou
Benin 2 (Djigla 12, Mounie 83)
Togo 1 (Adebayor 72)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Tessema Weyesa (Eth)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP D – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria (QF)	6	3	2	1	9	4	11
Benin (QF)	6	3	1	2	5	6	10
Gambia	6	1	3	2	6	6	6
Togo	6	1	2	3	4	8	5

Group E

Mar 22 - Asaba
Nigeria 3 (Ighalo pen 35, Onyekuru 50, Simon 90+1)
Seychelles 1 (Melanie 41)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Duarte (CVI)

Mar 24 - Sfax, Tunisia
Libya 1 (Benali pen 66)
South Africa 2 (Tau 50, 69)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** El Jaafari (Mor)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP E – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria (QF)	6	4	1	1	14	6	13
Sth Africa (QF)	6	3	3	0	11	2	12
Libya	6	2	1	3	16	11	7
Seychelles	6	0	1	5	3	25	1

Group F

Mar 23 - Accra
Ghana 1 (Ekuban 82)
Kenya 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bondo (Bot)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP F – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana (QF)	4	3	0	1	8	1	9
Kenya (QF)	4	2	1	1	4	1	7
Ethiopia	4	0	1	3	0	10	1

● *Sierra Leone were expelled from the tournament after FIFA suspended their FA; results annulled*

Group G

Mar 24 - Kinshasa
DR Congo 1 (Bakambu 51)
Liberia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** N'Diaye (Sen)

Mar 24 - Harare
Zimbabwe 2 (Billiat 20, Musona 36)
Congo 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Mohamed (Sud)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP G – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zimbabwe (QF)	6	3	2	1	9	4	11
DR Congo (QF)	6	2	3	1	8	6	9
Liberia	6	2	1	3	5	9	7
Congo	6	1	2	3	7	10	5

Group H

Mar 23 - Abidjan
Ivory Coast 3 (Pepe 6, Bailly 66, Cornet 72)
Rwanda 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Mogos Teklu (Eri)

Mar 24 - Bangui
Central African Republic 0
Guinea 0
Ref: Zio (BuF)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP H – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea (QF)	6	3	3	0	8	4	12
Ivory C'st (QF)	6	3	2	1	12	5	11
Cent Af Rep	6	1	3	2	4	8	6
Rwanda	6	0	2	4	5	12	2

Group I

Mar 22 - Francistown
Botswana 0
Angola 1 (Eduardo 21)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Amin Mohamed (Egy)

Mar 22 - Ouagadougou
Burkina Faso 1 (B Traore 19)
Mauritania 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ngambo (DRC)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP I – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Angola (QF)	6	4	0	2	9	6	12
Mauritania (QF)	6	4	0	2	7	6	12
Burkina Faso	6	3	1	2	8	5	10
Botswana	6	0	1	5	1	8	1

Group J

Mar 22 - Rades
Tunisia 4 (Ben Youssef 21, Badri 33, Sliti 53, Meriah 62)
Eswatini (Swaziland) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Gatogato (Brd)

Mar 23 - Niamey
Niger 1 (Moutari 82)
Egypt 1 (Trezeguet 47)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Malong (SSu)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP J – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia (QF)	6	5	0	1	12	4	15
Egypt (QF)	6	4	1	1	16	5	13
Niger	6	1	2	3	4	11	5
Eswatini	6	0	1	5	2	14	1

Group K

Mar 23 - Bissau
Guinea-Bissau 2 (Piqueti 12, Mendy 90+4)
Mozambique 2 (Ratifo 48, Nelson 89)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Selmi (Tun)

Mar 23 - Lusaka
Zambia 4 (Mulenga 12, 82, Malama 55, Kambole 90)
Namibia 1 (Shalulile 89)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Camille (Sey)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP K – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
G-Bissau (QF)	6	2	3	1	8	7	9
Namibia (QF)	6	2	2	2	5	7	8
Mozambique	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Zambia	6	2	1	3	8	7	7

Group L

Mar 24 - Praia
Cape Verde Islands 0
Lesotho 0
Ref: Keita (Mli)

Mar 24 - Dar es Salaam
Tanzania 3 (Msuva 21, Nyoni pen 51, Morris 57)
Uganda 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Otogo-Castane (Gab)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP L – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uganda (QF)	6	4	1	1	7	3	13
Tanzania (QF)	6	2	2	2	6	5	8
Lesotho	6	1	3	2	3	7	6
Cape Verde Is	6	1	2	3	4	5	5

● *The top 2 in each of the12 groups have qualified for the 24-team finals, to be held in Egypt fromJune 21 toJuly19, 2019*

CONCACAF NATIONS LEAGUE QUALS

3rd matchday

(game originally scheduled for Nov 16, 2018)
Mar 24 - The Valley, Anguilla
British Virgin Islands 1 (Wilson pen 76)
Bonaire 2 (Windster 7, 88)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Morrison (Jam)
Sent off: Kastaneer (Bonaire) 83

4th matchday

Mar 21 - The Valley, Anguilla
British Virgin Islands 2 (Caesar 64, Wiltshire 83)
Turks & Caicos Islands 2 (Forbes 86, Dorvil 87)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Gaymes (SVG)

Mar 21 - Kingstown
St Vincent & The Grenadines 2 (Windster og 77, Cunningham 79)
Bonaire 1 (Koffy 37)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Torres (PR)
Sent off: Bekman (Bonaire) 90

Mar 22 - The Valley
Anguilla 0
US Virgin Islands 3 (Mack 15, Pierre 26, Dennis 86)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Bassue (SKN)

Mar 22 - West Bay
Cayman Islands 1 (M Ebanks 49)
Montserrat 2 (Clifton pen 40, Woods-Garness 66)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Reyna (Gtm)

Mar 22 - StJohn's, Antigua & Barbuda
St Lucia 3 (Macfarlane 38, 62, L Joseph 67)
Aruba 2 (John 53, Gross 90+1)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Johnson (Guy)
Sent off: Kock (Aruba) 89

Mar 23 - StJohn's
Antigua & Barbuda 2 (Osbourne 1, Benjamin 49)
Curacao 1 (Kastaneer 37)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Solano (DoR)

Mar 23 - Roseau
Dominica 4 (Wade 24, 35, T Joseph 30, Thomas 85)
Bahamas 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Castro (Hnd)

Mar 23 - San Salvador
El Salvador 2 (Bonilla 49, Lowe og 85)
Jamaica 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Calderon (CR)
Sent off: Mattocks (Jamaica) 90

Mar 23 - Les Abymes
Guadeloupe 0
Martinique 1 (Jobello 63)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Cornejo (ESv)

Mar 23 - Leonora
Guyana 2 (Danns pen 16, Welshman 43)
Belize 1 (Kuylen 25)
HT: 2-1

Mar 23 - The Valley, Anguilla
Sint Maarten 4 (Cocks og 10, Lake 23, 59, Boelijn pen 30)
Saint-Martin 3 (Arrondell 11, Cocks 52, Dupalus pen 80)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Delsol (Dca)

Mar 23 - Paramaribo
Surinam 2 (Rijssel 38, Comvalius 71)
St Kitts & Nevis 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Lezama (Nic)

Mar 24 - Bridgetown
Barbados 0
Nicaragua 1 (Barrera 65)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Radix (Grn)

Mar 24 - Vancouver
Canada 4 (Hoilett 12, Cavallini 39, 50, David 41)
French Guiana 1 (Rimane 26)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Montano (Mex)

Mar 24 - Santiago de los Caballeros
Dominican Republic 1 (Pena 3)
Bermuda 3 (Lewis 15, Wells 64, Donawa 74)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Senecharles (Hai)

Mar 24 - Port-au-Prince
Haiti 2 (Nazon 26, Lafrance 87)
Cuba 1 (Paradela 61)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Lopez (Gtm)

Mar 24 - Bayamon
Puerto Rico 0
Grenada 2 (German 27, Paterson 74)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Richards (SKN)

CONCACAF NATIONS LEAGUE QUALS – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Haiti	4	4	0	0	19	2	12
Canada	4	4	0	0	18	1	12
Martinique	4	4	0	0	10	2	12
Curacao	4	3	0	1	22	2	9
Bermuda	4	3	0	1	17	4	9
Cuba	4	3	0	1	15	2	9
Guyana[1]	4	3	0	1	14	3	9
Jamaica	4	3	0	1	12	3	9
Nicaragua	4	3	0	1	9	2	9
El Salvador	4	3	0	1	7	2	9
Montserrat	4	3	0	1	6	3	9
Surinam	4	2	1	1	8	2	7
St Lucia	4	2	1	1	7	4	7
Dominica	4	2	1	1	6	5	7
St Kitts & Nevis	4	2	0	2	11	3	6
Dominican Rep	4	2	0	2	9	4	6
Belize	4	2	0	2	6	3	6
Antigua & B'da	4	2	0	2	10	8	6
French Guiana	4	2	0	2	8	6	6
St Vincent & G	4	2	0	2	5	6	6
Grenada	4	2	0	2	7	14	6
Aruba	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Guadeloupe	4	1	1	2	3	7	4
Turks & Caicos	4	1	1	2	5	23	4
Barbados[1]	4	1	0	3	3	7	3
Bonaire	4	1	0	3	3	14	3
US Virgin Is	4	1	0	3	3	16	3
Sint Maarten	4	1	0	3	4	30	3
Cayman Is	4	0	1	3	1	9	1
British Virgin Is	4	0	1	3	3	13	1
Anguilla	4	0	1	3	1	15	1
Bahamas	4	0	1	3	1	15	1
Puerto Rico	4	0	0	4	0	5	0
Saint-Martin	4	0	0	4	5	22	0

[1] *Guyana v Barbados originally finished 2-2 but was subsequently awarded 3-0 to Guyana because Barbados fielded 2 ineligible players*

● *Each country played 4 games in the qualifying stage (2 home, 2 away), the results being used to compile the final league table of the 34 competing teams (shown above)*
● *The top 6 will participate in League A of the 2019-20 CONCACAF Nations League competition, together with the 6 countries that participated in the final round of CONCACAF's 2018 World Cup qualifiers (Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago and United States), who qualified automatically for League A of the Nations League competition*
● *The next16 countries (placed 7th to 22nd) will participate in League B of the 2019-20 CONCACAF Nations League competition*
● *The bottom12 countries will participate in League C of the 2019-20 CONCACAF Nations League competition*
● *In addition, the top10 have qualified for the 2019 CONCACAF Gold Cup finals, joining direct entrants Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago and United States*

3-NATIONS TOURNAMENT

Played in Fiji

Mar18 - Suva
Fiji 3 (Drudru 36, 45, Matarerega 90)
New Caledonia 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 600. **Ref:** Hopken (Van)
Sent off: Raura (Fiji) 80

Mar 21 - Lautoka
New Caledonia 1 (Kayara pen 24)
Mauritius 3 (Francois 57, Perticots 66, Nazira 73)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Chand (Fij)

Mar 24 - Lautoka
Fiji 1 (Krishna 59)
Mauritius 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Hopken (Van)
Sent off: Botlar (Mauritius) 66

3-NATIONS TOURNAMENT – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fiji (C)	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Mauritius	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
New Caledonia	2	0	0	2	1	6	0

AIRMARINE CUP

Played in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Semi-finals

Mar 20
Oman 5 (Mubarak 9, Saleh 26, Al Balushi 45, Al Muqbali 49, Akaak 90+2)
Afghanistan 0
HT: 3-0

Mar 20
Malaysia 0
Singapore 1 (Faris 83)
HT: 0-0

3rd-place match

Mar 23
Malaysia 2 (Faiz 44, Alikhil og 84)
Afghanistan 1 (Shayesteh 32)
HT: 1-1

Final

Mar 23
Oman 1 (Al Muqbali 28)
Singapore 1 (Zulfahmi 90+3)
HT: 1-0
Oman 5-4 on pens

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CH'SHIP

Played in Basra, Iraq

Mar 20
Iraq 1 (Meram 75)
Syria 0
HT: 0-0

Mar 23
Jordan 0
Syria 1 (Al Khatib 86)
HT: 0-0

Mar 26
Iraq 3 (Hussein 38, Resan 52, M Ali 70)
Jordan 2 (Sulaka og 7, Faisal 87)
HT: 1-1

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CH'SHIP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq (C)	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
Syria	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Jordan	2	0	0	2	2	4	0

CHINA CUP

Played in Nanning, China

Semi-finals

Mar 21
China 0
Thailand 1 (Chanathip 33)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Falahi (Qat)
China: Yan Junling - Zhang Linpeng, Gao Zhunyi, Feng Xiaoting, Li Lei (Liu Yang 45+2), Wang Yongpo (Xie Pengfei 46), Hao Junmin (He Chao 78), Wei Shihao, Zhang Xizhe (Wang Gang 70), Wu Xi, Dong Xuesheng (Tan Long 80).
Thailand: Siwarak - Nattapon (Narubadin 77), Suphan, Adisorn (Peerapat 89), Tristan, Tanaboon, Sarach (Siwakorn 90), Theerathon, Thitipan (Peeradon 90+3), Adisak (Chananan 90+2), Chanathip.

Mar 22
Uzbekistan 0
Uruguay 3 (Pereiro 5, Stuani 23, 82)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)
Uzbekistan: Kuvvatov - Khashimov, Krimets, Ismailov, Sayfiev, Ahmedov, Shukurov, Sidikov (Alibaev 72), Khamdamov (Mirzaev 65), Shomurodov (Bikmaev 65), Masharipov.
Uruguay: Muslera - Caceres, Gimenez, Godin (Coates 63), Laxalt (Gonzalez 61), Vecino, Bentancur (Torreira 70), Nandez (Rodriguez 77), Lodeiro (Saracchi 61), Pereiro, Stuani (Gomez 83).

3rd-place match

Mar 25
China 0
Uzbekistan 1 (Shomurodov 34)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Al Shammari (Qat)
China: Yan Junling - Fu Huan (Liu Yang 46), Zhang Linpeng, Li Ang, Gao Zhunyi (Wang Gang 58), Zhang Xiuwei (Wang Yongpo 84), He Chao (Hao Junmin 58), Wu Xi (Peng Xinli 67), Tan Long, Dong Xuesheng (Xie Pengfei 58), Wei Shihao.
Uzbekistan: Kuvvatov - Shorakhmedov, Tukhtakhodjaev, Ismailov, Zoteev, Shukurov (Ahmedov 42), Khamrobekov, Sidikov (Khamdamov 70), Alibaev, Shomurodov (Abdukholikov 72), Masharipov.

Final

Mar 25
Thailand 0
Uruguay 4 (Vecino 6, Pereiro 38, Stuani 58, Gomez 88)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Ma (Chn)
Thailand: Siwarak (Chatchai 74) - Nattapon (Kroekrit 72), Suphan, Adisorn, Tristan (Narubadin 66), Tanaboon, Sarach (Peeradon 66), Theerathon, Thitiphan (Sanukran 79), Adisak (Picha 77), Chanathip.
Uruguay: Muslera - Gonzalez, Gimenez, Godin (M Suarez 70), Caceres (Saracchi 61), Vecino (Torreira 46), Valverde, Nandez (Rodriguez 60), Lodeiro, Pereiro (De Arrascaeta 46), Stuani (Gomez 60).

FRIENDLIES

Saturday, March 16

Mar16 - Nassau
Bahamas 6 (Delancy 2, 8, 61, McPhee 40, J Thompson 78, St Fleur 87)
Turks & Caicos Islands 1 (Marco Fenelus 80)
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Da Costa (Bhm)

Mar16 - Nieuw Nickerie
Surinam 3 (Rijssel pen 22, Comvalius 32, Moore og 40)
Guyana 1 (Benjamin 60)
HT: 3-0

Sunday, March 17

Mar17 - Saint-Jean
Saint Barthelemy 4
Saint-Martin 3
HT: 3-1

Monday, March 18

Mar18 - Honiara
Solomon Islands 3 (Ifunaoa 17, Lea'alafa 53, Nawo 73)
Vanuatu 1 (Tangis 19)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Yareboinen (PNG)
Sent off: Spokeyjack (Vanuatu) 84

Tuesday, March 19

Mar19 - Mandalay
Myanmar 0
Taiwan 0

Wednesday, March 20

Mar 20 - Wolfsburg
Germany 1 (Goretzka 69)
Serbia 1 (Jovic 12)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 26,101. **Ref:** Madden (Sco)
Germany: Neuer (Ter Stegen 46) - Klostermann (Kehrer 90), Tah, Sule, Halstenberg, Kimmich, Gundogan, Havertz (Reus 46), Brandt (Goretzka 56), Werner, Sane (Schulz 90+6).
Serbia: Dmitrovic - Rukavina, Spajic, Milenkovic, Bogosavac (S Mitrovic 79), Maksimovic (Jovicic 88), Milinkovic-Savic (Lukic 62), Gacinovic (Radonjic 62), Lazovic (Zivkovic 79), Ljajic, Jovic (Pavkov 70). *Sent off: Pavkov 90+3.*

Mar 20 - Wrexham
Wales 1 (Woodburn 90+2)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,326. **Ref:** Marshall (NI)
Wales: Ward (A Davies 46) - Gunter, Williams (J Lawrence 61), Dummett (John 61), Taylor, T Roberts (Matondo 71), Evans, Vaulks, Hedges, Woodburn, Thomas.
Trinidad & Tobago: Phillip - David, Cyrus, Bateau, Hodge, Garcia (Peltier 61), Hyland, Paul (Hackshaw 81), George, Lewis, Plaza (Cato 46).

Thursday, March 21

Mar 21 - Pristina
Kosovo 2 (Rrahmani 42, Celina 66)
Denmark 2 (Eriksen pen 63, Hojbjerg 90+1)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 13,000. **Ref:** Palabiyik (Tur)
Kosovo: Muric (Ujkani 46) - Vojvoda, Rrahmani, Aliti, Paqarada, Shala, Halimi (Kastrati 81), Rashica (Zhegrova 46), Celina (Voca 71), Zeneli (Berisha 70), Muriqi (Nuhiu 81).
Denmark: Schmeichel - Dalsgaard (J Larsen 46), Christensen (Kjaer 60), M Jorgensen, Ankersen, Hojbjerg, Delaney, Braithwaite, Lerager (Eriksen 60), Bruun Larsen (Gytkjaer 77), N Jorgensen (Dolberg 60).

Mar 21 - Al Ahmadi
Kuwait 0
Nepal 0

Mar 21 - Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates 2 (Al Ahbabi 54, Mabkhout 64)
Saudi Arabia 1 (Adam 18)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 750. **Ref:** Arafah (Jor)

Mar 21 - Orlando
United States 1 (Zardes 81)
Ecuador 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,422. **Ref:** Gantar (Can)
United States: Johnson - Adams, Long, Brooks, Ream, McKennie (Roldan 68), Trapp (Bradley 59), Morris (Yedlin 68), Pulisic (Lletget 62), Arriola (Lewis 77), Zardes.
Ecuador: Dominguez - Paredes, Achilier, Arboleda, Caicedo, Orejuela, Gruezo, Mendez, A Valencia, Romario Ibarra (Julio 71), Renato Ibarra (Campana 46).

Friday, March 22

Mar 22 - Madrid, Spain
Argentina 1 (Lautaro Martinez 60)
Venezuela 3 (Rondon 6, Murillo 44, Martinez pen 76)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Sanchez Martinez (Spa)
Argentina: Armani - Foyth, Mercado (Kannemann 46), Lisandro Martinez (Blanco 46), Montiel, Lo Celso (Pereyra 78), Paredes, Tagliafico, Messi, G Martinez (Suarez 46), Lautaro Martinez (Benedetto 70).
Venezuela: Farinez - Hernandez, Osorio, Villanueva, Rosales, Murillo (Hurtado 89), Herrera (Soteldo 64), Moreno, Rincon, Machis (Anor 79), Rondon (Martinez 72).

Mar 22 - Guatemala City
Guatemala 1 (Cincotta 31)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Herrera (ESv)
Guatemala: Hagen - Lopez, Pinto, Gallardo, Cincotta (Soto 73), Saravia, Contreras (Aparicio 68), Galindo (Betancourth 90+2), Yanes, Martinez (Guerra 82), Vargas.
Costa Rica: Navas - Smith, Vargas, Waston, Francis (Lassiter 63), Marin (George 46), Borges, Allan Cruz, Aguilar (Ruiz 60), Leal (Matarrita 46), Campbell (Araya 81).

Mar 22 - Yokohama
Japan 0
Colombia 1 (Falcao pen 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 63,302. **Ref:** Green (Aus)
Japan: Higashiguchi - Muroya, Tomiyasu, Shoji, Sasaki (Anzai 89), Doan (Inui 71), Shibasaki, Yamaguchi (Kobayashi 71), Nakajima, Minamino (Kamada 79), Suzuki (Kagawa 65).
Colombia: Vargas - Palacios, Mina, D Sanchez, Machado, Barrios, Lerma, Villa (Zapata 57), Rodriguez (Morelos 87), Muriel (Diaz 79), Falcao (Uribe 82).

Mar 22 - San Diego, USA
Mexico 3 (Jimenez pen 52, Moreno 64, Lozano 65)
Chile 1 (Castillo 69)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Unkel (USA)
Mexico: Ochoa - L Rodriguez, Salcedo, Moreno, Gallardo, C Rodriguez (Layun 90), Alvarez, Guardado (Gutierrez 75), Pizarro (L Montes 84), Lozano (Lainez 81), Jimenez (J Hernandez 75).
Chile: Arias - Isla, Medel, Maripan, Mena (Opazo 72), Pulgar, Hernandez (Mora 76), Vidal, Aranguiz, Castillo, Morales (Jara 72).

Mar 22 - Harrison, USA
Peru 1 (Cueva 4)
Paraguay 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Marrufo (USA)
Peru: Gallese - Advincula, Araujo, Abram, Trauco, Tapia, Yotun, Carrillo (Polo 77), Cueva (Reyna 89), Flores (Gonzales 77; Da Silva 90+1), Farfan.
Paraguay: Fernandez - Escobar (Perez 81), Balbuena, Gomez, I Piris, R Piris (D Valdez 42), D Gonzalez (O Romero 90+1), R Rojas, Almiron, Dominguez (M Rojas 66), Sanabria.

Mar 22 - Ulsan
South Korea 1 (Lee Chung-yong 86)
Bolivia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 41,117. **Ref:** Al Marri (Qat)
South Korea: Kim Seung-gyu - Kim Moon-hwan, Kim Min-jae, Kwon Kyung-won, Hong Chul, Ju Se-jong, Kwon Chang-hoon (Lee Jin-hyun 88), Hwang In-beom (Lee Chung-yong 70), Na Sang-ho (Lee Seung-woo 63), Ji Dong-won (Hwang Ui-jo 63), Son Heung-min.
Bolivia: Cordano - Torres (D Bejarano 46), Jusino, Haquin, M Bejarano, Castro (Saavedra 77), Arano (L Vaca 46), Galindo (Vargas 72), Chumacero (H Vaca 87), Alvarez, R Vaca (Justiniano 59).

Saturday, March 23

Mar 23 - Porto, Portugal
Brazil 1 (Lucas Paqueta 32)
Panama 1 (Machado 36)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Pinheiro (Por)
Brazil: Ederson - Fagner, Eder Militao, Miranda, Alex Telles, Casemiro, Arthur (Felipe Anderson 72), Lucas Paqueta (Everton 60), Richarlison, Roberto Firmino (Gabriel Jesus 60), Philippe Coutinho.
Panama: Mejia - Machado, Cummings, Escobar, Murillo (Blackman 85), Cooper (Walker 82), Godoy (Vargas 90+1), Davis, Quintero (Browne 85), Torres (Fajardo 74), Rodriguez (Arroyo 89).

Sunday, March 24

Mar 24 - Taipei
Taiwan 0
Solomon Islands 1 (Totori pen 41)
HT: 0-1

Monday, March 25

Mar 25 - Baku
Azerbaijan 0
Lithuania 0
Ref: Fesnic (Rom)
Azerbaijan: Agayev - Medvedev, Huseynov, Krivotsyuk, Abdullayev (Madatov 64), Garayev (Mahmudov 85), Richard Almeida (Nazarov 46), Eddy (Babayev 76), Khalilzade (Abbasov 88), Dadashov (Alaskarov 65), Sheydayev.
Lithuania: Zubas (Bartkus 46) - Klimavicius, Palionis, Vaitkunas (Andriuskevicius 89), Baravykas, Novikovas (Kuklys 82), Cernych (Mikoliunas 65), Slivka, Vorobjovas, Valskis (Petravicius 46), Golubickas (Marazas 62).

Mar 25 - Girona
Catalonia 2 (Bojan 53, Javi Puado 88)
Venezuela 1 (Rosales 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,671.
Ref: Estrada Fernandez (Spa)
Catalonia: Edgar Badia (Becerra 46) - Aleix Vidal (Javi Puado 63), Pique (Riqui Puig 51), Bartra (Muniesa 46), Didac Vila (Cucurella 46), Jordan (Aleix Garcia 46), Granell (Oriol Romeu 46), Pere Pons (Victor Sanchez 46), Melendo (Montoya 46), Sergio Garcia (Pere Milla 35), Bojan (Cardona 63).
Venezuela: Farinez (Romo 46) - Gonzalez (Hernandez 78), Osorio, Chancellor, Rosales, Moreno, Soteldo (Aristeguieta 60), Herrera, Rincon (Seijas 46), Murillo (Machis 60), Martinez (Anor 60; Cadiz 81).

Mar 25 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 1 (Nasser pen 29)
Nepal 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,000

Mar 25 - Mandalay
Myanmar 0
Indonesia 2 (Nwokolo 41, Spasojevic pen 85)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Somsingha (Tha)

Mar 25 - Riyadh
Saudi Arabia 3 (Al Shamekh pen 4, Adam 13, Al Khabrani pen 57)
Equatorial Guinea 2 (Nsue pen 32, pen 71)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Jamali (Kuw)

Tuesday, March 26

Mar 26 - Blida
Algeria 1 (Bounedjah pen 69)
Tunisia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Guezzaz (Sud)
Algeria: Oukidja - Atal, Bensebaini, Lekhal (Abeid 12; Ounas 66), Mandi, Taider, Benlamri, Feghouli, Bounedjah, Mahrez, Benrahma (Benkhemassa 75).
Tunisia: Ben Mustapha - Bedoui, Ben Youssef, Haddadi, Meriah, Saidani, Sassi, Drager (Azouni 71), Sliti (Msakni 43), Khaoui (Maaloul 57), Chaouat (Chamakhi 85).

Mar 26 - San Jose
Costa Rica 1 (Fuller 29)
Jamaica 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Vergara (Pan)
Costa Rica: Navas - Gonzalez, George, Campbell (Araya 76), Borges, Allan Cruz (Mora 64), Ruiz (Ortiz 83), Calvo, Matarrita (Lassiter 64), Waston (Vargas 76), Fuller (Smith 72).
Jamaica: Knight (White 61) - Powell, Hector (McCarthy 56), Francis, Richie (Watson 83), Foster (East 61), Lowe, Flemmings, Brown (Topey 56), Orgill (Burke 87), Lambert.

Mar 26 - Prague
Czech Republic 1 (Pavelka 37)
Brazil 3 (Roberto Firmino 49, Gabriel Jesus 83, 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 19,116. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
Czech Republic: Pavlenka - Coufal, Celustka (Kudela 59), Suchy, Novak (Gebre Selassie 46), Soucek, Pavelka (Kral 69), Masopust, Darida (Frydek 56), Zmrhal (Jankto 84), Schick (Vydra 53).
Brazil: Alisson - Danilo, Marquinhos, Thiago Silva, Alex Sandro, Allan, Casemiro (Arthur 71), Lucas Paqueta (Everton 46), Richarlison (David Neres 63), Roberto Firmino (Fabinho 87), Philippe Coutinho (Gabriel Jesus 72).

Mar 26 - Gibraltar
Gibraltar 0
Estonia 1 (Vassiljev 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,900. **Ref:** Walsh (Sco)
Gibraltar: Goldwin - J Chipolina (Mouelhi 48), Pons (Annesley 46), Mascarenhas-Olivero, R Chipolina, Walker, Sergeant, Bardon (Coombes 71), De Barr (Jolley 90+1), Anthony Hernandez (Priestley 63), Casciaro (Styche 63).
Estonia: Aksalu - Kams (Baranov 44), Kruglov, Mets, Vihmann, Vassiljev, Lepistu, Roosnupp (Liivak 58), Kait, Zenjov (Ojamaa 78), Sappinen (Anier 71).

Mar 26 - Harrison, USA
Honduras 0
Ecuador 0
Ref: Fernandez (Mex)
Honduras: L Lopez - Beckeles, H Figueroa, M Figueroa, Izaguirre, Garrido, Acosta, Elis, A Lopez (Alvarez 80), Chirinos, Lozano.
Ecuador: Banguera - Paredes, Achilier, Arboleda, Caicedo, Noboa (Intriago 46), Mendez (Gruezo 67), Orejuela (Julio 68; Angelo Preciado 80), Renato Ibarra, Mena, Campana (Romario Ibarra 46).

Mar 26 - Abidjan
Ivory Coast 1 (Kodjia pen 90+1)
Liberia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 23,470. **Ref:** Ouattara (Alg)
Ivory Coast: Cisse (Sangare 71) - Bagayoko, Traore, Deli (Kanon 48), Bamba, Die, Angban (Seri 83), Cornet, Diomande, Assale, Meite (Kodjia 73).
Liberia: Williams - J Johnson, Dennis, Maccornel (Kamara 86), Swen, Tisdell, Njie, Dorley, Nimely, Sangare (S Johnson 59), Jebor.

Mar 26 - Kobe
Japan 1 (Nakajima 76)
Bolivia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 28,133. **Ref:** Ams (Aus)
Japan: Schmidt - Nishi, Miura, Hatanaka, Anzai (Sasaki 73), Hashimoto, Kobayashi (Shibasaki 68), Inui (Nakajima 61), Kagawa (Minamino 68), Usami (Doan 61), Kamada (Suzuki 83).
Bolivia: Lampe - Haquin, D Bejarano, Justiniano, Castro (Saavedra 68), Jusino, Vargas (Galindo 82), L Vaca, Fernandez, Alvarez (H Vaca 59), Ramallo (Chumacero 46).

Mar 26 - Santa Clara, USA
Mexico 4 (J Dos Santos 6, Gomez og 9, J Hernandez 24, L Montes 90+1)
Paraguay 2 (Perez 59, D Gonzalez 84)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 50,317. **Ref:** Herrera (CR)
Mexico: Gudino - Sanchez, Reyes, Araujo (C Montes 73), Layun, J Dos Santos, Alvarez (Vazquez 46), Gutierrez (Guzman 78), Lainez (Brizuela 46), J Hernandez (Vega 78), Alvarado (L Montes 73).
Paraguay: Silva - B Valdez, Gomez (I Piris 46), Alonso, Arzamendia, Perez (D Gonzalez 83), R Rojas, M Rojas (Almiron 56), Villalba (Dominguez 83), Alejandro Romero (C Ortiz 68), C Gonzalez (O Romero 56). *Sent off: Almiron 63.*

Mar 26 - Tangier
Morocco 0
Argentina 1 (Correa 83)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Sikazwe (Zam)
Morocco: Bounou - Benatia (Abdelhamid 61), Da Costa (Idrissi 87), Saiss, Mazraoui, El Ahmadi (Ait Bennasser 61), Boussoufa (Fajr 74), Hakimi, Belhanda (Bourabia 87), Boufal, Boutaib (Alioui 75).
Argentina: Andrada (Musso 67) - Montiel, Pezzella, Kannemann, Acuna, Pereyra (Marcone 90+2), Rodriguez, Paredes (Zaracho 76), De Paul (Correa 62), Dybala (Lo Celso 79), Lautaro Martinez (Suarez 56).

Mar 26 - Managua
Nicaragua 0
Guatemala 1 (Martinez 39)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Kellys (Pan)
Nicaragua: Rodriguez - Mendoza (Rosas 46), Gutierrez, O Lopez, L Lopez, M Lopez, Cadena (Bonilla 46), Punyed, Chavarria, Gkoufas (Galeano 46; Baez 67), Betancur (Serapio 77).
Guatemala: Hagen - Gallardo, Lopez, Pinto, Yanes, Morales, Galindo, Contreras (Aparicio 80), Saravia, Vargas (Soto 85), Martinez.

Mar 26 - Asaba
Nigeria 1 (Onuachu 1)
Egypt 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Bulu (Gha)
Nigeria: Akpeyi (Ezenwa 46) - Shehu (N Udo 90), Troost-Ekong, Balogun, Collins, Ndidi, Ogu (Ajayi 68), Iwobi (Etebo 73), Onuachu (Ighalo 88), Simon (I Udo 90+4), Onyekuru.
Egypt: Gennesh - O Gaber (Hany 81), Alaa (Mansour 51), Elmohammady, Fotouh, Hamed, Elneny, Trezeguet, S Mohsen (Warda 46), I Gaber, Mohamed (Koka 69).

Mar 26 - Washington DC, USA
Peru 0
El Salvador 2 (Trauco og 61, O Ceren 90+1)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ward (SKN)
Peru: Gallese - Advincula (Corzo 84), Araujo, Callens, Trauco, Tapia, Yotun (Farfan 65), Carrillo (Polo 46), Cueva, Flores (Da Silva 46; Lopez 84), Reyna (Arias 77).
El Salvador: Hernandez - Marroquin, Dominguez, Garcia, Barahona (Jimenez 74), Granitto (Orellana 46), Ortiz (O Ceren 81), Monterroza, Coca (Mayen 59), Rivas, Rugamas.

Mar 26 - Dakar
Senegal 2 (Mane 87, Konate 90+2)
Mali 1 (Adama Traore/M 73)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Diabel (Mra)
Senegal: Gomis - Gassama, Diaw, A N'Diaye (Diatta 46), Kouyate (Sane 76), N'Doye, Cisse, Thioub (Mane 76), M N'Diaye, Balde (N'Gom 56), Diagne (Konate 62).
Mali: D Diarra (Samassa 46) - F Sacko (Dibassy 56), L Coulibaly, I Traore (Doucoure 46), Haidara, Djenepo (Adama Traore/M 63), Fofana, Doumbia (Tandia 73), Marega, Diaby (Adama Traore/F 38), Kouyate.

Mar 26 - Seoul
South Korea 2 (Son Heung-min 17, Lee Jae-sung 58)
Colombia 1 (Diaz 49)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 64,388. **Ref:** Al Jassim (Qat)
South Korea: Cho Hyun-woo - Kim Moon-hwan, Kim Min-jae, Kim Young-gwon, Hong Chul, Jung Woo-young, Lee Jae-sung (Kwon Chang-hoon 61), Hwang In-beom, Lee Chung-yong (Na Sang-ho 70), Hwang Ui-jo (Kwon Kyung-won 83), Son Heung-min.
Colombia: Arboleda - Mina (J Murillo 43), D Sanchez, Orejuela, C Borja, Cuellar (Barrios 65), Uribe (Chara 83), Diaz, Zapata (Falcao 61), Morelos (Rodriguez 46), Villa (Muriel 65).

Mar 26 - Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates 0
Syria 0

Mar 26 - Houston
United States 1 (Pulisic 4)
Chile 1 (Opazo 9)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 18,033. **Ref:** Parchment (Jam)
United States: Horvath - Yedlin, Miazga, O Gonzalez, Ream, Bradley, Roldan (Lewis 84), Pulisic (Lletget 35), Baird (Lovitz 56), Zardes (Morris 79), Arriola (Trapp 66).
Chile: Arias - Isla, Medel, Jara, Maripan (Vegas 70), Opazo, Vidal, Pavez, Aranguiz (Martinez 90), Castillo (Rubio 86), Valdes (Pulgar 70).

Club football

AFRICA

CAF SUPER CUP

(Champions League holders, Esperance Tunis v Confederation Cup holders, Raja Casablanca)
Mar 29 - Doha, Qatar
Esperance Tunis (Tun) 1 (Belaili 57)
Raja Casablanca (Mor) 2 (Hafidi 22, Banoun 64)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Tessema Weyesa (Eth)
Esperance Tunis: Jridi - Derbali (Mbarki 54), Dhaouadi, Yacoubi (Jouini 73), Ben Mohamed, Coulibaly, Kom, Badri, Bguir (Belaili 46), Elhouni, Khenissi.
Raja Casablanca: Zniti - Boutayeb, Banoun, Al Warfali, Ngah, Achchakir, El Wardi, Benhalib, Hafidi (Nanah 80), Hadraf, Rahimi (Iajour 90+4).

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A
Jan 11: Lobi Stars (Nga) 2 Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) 1; Wydad Casablanca (Mor) 5 ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 2.
Jan 19: ASEC Abidjan 1 Lobi Stars 0; Mamelodi Sundowns 2 Wydad Casablanca 1.
Feb 1: Mamelodi Sundowns 3 ASEC Abidjan 1.
Feb 2: Lobi Stars 0 Wydad Casablanca 1.
Feb 12: ASEC Abidjan 0 Mamelodi Sundowns 0; Wydad Casablanca 0 Lobi Stars 0.
Mar 9: ASEC Abidjan 2 Wydad Casablanca 0; Mamelodi Sundowns 3 Lobi Stars 0.
Mar 16: Lobi Stars 2 ASEC Abidjan 0; Wydad Casablanca 1 Mamelodi Sundowns 0.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wydad C (Q)	6	3	1	2	8	6	10
Mamelodi S (Q)	6	3	1	2	9	5	10
Lobi Stars	6	2	1	3	4	6	7
ASEC Abidjan	6	2	1	3	6	10	7

Group B
Jan 11: Horoya (Gui) 1 Esperance Tunis (Tun) 1.
Jan 12: FC Platinum (Zim) 0 Orlando Pirates (SAf) 0.
Jan 18: Esperance Tunis 2 FC Platinum 0; Orlando Pirates 3 Horoya 0.
Feb 2: FC Platinum 0 Horoya 1; Orlando Pirates 0 Esperance Tunis 0.
Feb 12: Esperance Tunis 2 Orlando Pirates 0; Horoya 2 FC Platinum 0.
Mar 8: Esperance Tunis 2 Horoya 0; Orlando Pirates 2 FC Platinum 2.
Mar 16: FC Platinum 1 Esperance Tunis 2; Horoya 2 Orlando Pirates 1.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esperance T (Q)	6	4	2	0	9	2	14
Horoya (Q)	6	3	1	2	6	7	10
Orlando P'tes	6	1	3	2	6	6	6
FC Platinum	6	0	2	4	3	9	2

Group C
Jan 11: Club Africain (Tun) 0 CS Constantine (Alg) 1.
Jan 12: TP Mazembe (DRC) 2 Ismaily (Egy) 0.
Jan 18: Ismaily 0 Club Africain 3 (awarded).
Jan 19: CS Constantine 3 TP Mazembe 0.
Feb 2: TP Mazembe 8 Club Africain 0.
Feb 12: Club Africain 0 TP Mazembe 0.
Feb 23: Ismaily 1 CS Constantine 1.
Mar 2: CS Constantine 3 Ismaily 2.
Mar 8: CS Constantine 0 Club Africain 1; Ismaily 1 TP Mazembe 1.
Mar 16: Club Africain 1 Ismaily 0; TP Mazembe 2 CS Constantine 0.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TP Mazembe (Q)	6	3	2	1	13	4	11
CS Cons'tine (Q)	6	3	1	2	8	6	10
Club Africain	6	3	1	2	5	9	10
Ismaily	6	0	2	4	4	11	2

Group D
Jan 12: Al Ahly (Egy) 2 AS Vita (DRC) 0; Simba (Tan) 3 JS Saoura (Alg) 0.
Jan 18: JS Saoura 1 Al Ahly 1.
Jan 19: AS Vita 5 Simba 0.
Feb 2: Al Ahly 5 Simba 0; AS Vita 2 JS Saoura 2.
Feb 12: JS Saoura 1 AS Vita 0; Simba 1 Al Ahly 0.
Mar 9: AS Vita 1 Al Ahly 0; JS Saoura 2 Simba 0.
Mar 16: Al Ahly 3 JS Saoura 0; Simba 2 AS Vita 1.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ahly (Q)	6	3	1	2	11	3	10
Simba (Q)	6	3	0	3	6	13	9
JS Saoura	6	2	2	2	6	9	8
AS Vita	6	2	1	3	9	7	7

● *The top 2 in each group qualified for the quarter-finals*

CONFEDERATION CUP

Group A
Feb 3: AS Otoho (Con) 1 RS Berkane (Mor) 1; Hassania Agadir (Mor) 1 Raja Casablanca (Mor) 1.
Feb 13: Raja Casablanca 0 AS Otoho 0; RS Berkane 2 Hassania Agadir 1.
Feb 24: Hassania Agadir 2 AS Otoho 1; Raja Casablanca 2 RS Berkane 4.
Mar 3: AS Otoho 1 Hassania Agadir 0; RS Berkane 0 Raja Casablanca 0.
Mar 10: Raja Casablanca 0 Hassania Agadir 0; RS Berkane 3 AS Otoho 0.
Mar 17: AS Otoho 1 Raja Casablanca 4; Hassania Agadir 1 RS Berkane 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
RS Berkane (Q)	6	3	2	1	10	5	11
Hass Agadir (Q)	6	2	2	2	5	5	8
Raja Casa'nca	6	1	4	1	7	6	7
AS Otoho	6	1	2	3	4	10	5

Group B
Feb 3: Enugu Rangers (Nga) 2 Salitas (BuF) 0; Etoile Sahel (Tun) 0 CS Sfaxien (Tun) 1.
Feb 13: CS Sfaxien 1 Enugu Rangers 1; Salitas 0 Etoile Sahel 0.
Feb 24: CS Sfaxien 0 Salitas 0; Etoile Sahel 2 Enugu Rangers 1.
Mar 3: Enugu Rangers 0 Etoile Sahel 2; Salitas 0 CS Sfaxien 0.
Mar 10: CS Sfaxien 2 Etoile Sahel 1; Salitas 1 Enugu Rangers 1.
Mar 17: Enugu Rangers 0 CS Sfaxien 1; Etoile Sahel 1 Salitas 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CS Sfaxien (Q)	6	3	3	0	5	2	12
Etoile Sahel (Q)	6	3	1	2	6	4	10
Enugu Rangers	6	1	2	3	5	7	5
Salitas	6	0	4	2	1	4	4

Group C
Feb 3: Al Hilal Omdurman (Sud) 1 Asante Kotoko (Gha) 0; Zesco United (Zam) 2 Nkana (Zam) 0.
Feb 13: Asante Kotoko 2 Zesco United 1; Nkana 2 Al Hilal Omdurman 1.
Feb 24: Nkana 3 Asante Kotoko 1; Zesco United 1 Al Hilal Omdurman 1.
Mar 3: Al Hilal Omdurman 3 Zesco United 1; Asante Kotoko 3 Nkana 0.
Mar 10: Asante Kotoko 1 Al Hilal Omdurman 1; Nkana 3 Zesco United 0.
Mar 17: Al Hilal Omdurman 4 Nkana 1; Zesco United 2 Asante Kotoko 1.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Hilal Om (Q)	6	3	2	1	11	6	11
Nkana (Q)	6	3	0	3	9	11	9
Asante Kotoko	6	2	1	3	8	8	7
Zesco United	6	2	1	3	7	10	7

Group D
Feb 3: Gor Mahia (Ken) 4 Zamalek (Egy) 2; Hussein Dey (Alg) 2 Petro Atletico (Ang) 1.
Feb 13: Petro Atletico 2 Gor Mahia 1; Zamalek 1 Hussein Dey 1.
Feb 24: Gor Mahia 2 Hussein Dey 0; Zamalek 1 Petro Atletico 1.
Mar 3: Hussein Dey 1 Gor Mahia 0; Petro Atletico 0 Zamalek 1.
Mar 10: Petro Atletico 2 Hussein Dey 0; Zamalek 4 Gor Mahia 0.
Mar 17: Gor Mahia 1 Petro Atletico 0; Hussein Dey 0 Zamalek 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP D – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zamalek (Q)	6	2	3	1	9	6	9
Gor Mahia (Q)	6	3	0	3	8	9	9
Hussein Dey	6	2	2	2	4	6	8
Petro Atletico	6	2	1	3	6	6	7

● *The top 2 in each group qualified for the quarter-finals*

EUROPE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Round of 16

1st legs

Feb12
Manchester United (Eng) 0
Paris Saint-Germain (Fra) 2 (Kimpembe 53, Mbappe 60)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 74,054. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)
Sent off: Pogba (Manchester United) 89

Roma (Ita) 2 (Zaniolo 70, 76)
Porto (Por) 1 (Adrian Lopez 79)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 51,727. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)

Feb13
Ajax (Hol) 1 (Ziyech 75)
Real Madrid (Spa) 2 (Benzema 60, Marco Asensio 87)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 52,286. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)

Tottenham Hotspur (Eng) 3 (Son 47, Vertonghen 83, Llorente 86)
Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 71,214. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)

Feb19
Liverpool (Eng) 0
Bayern Munich (Ger) 0
Att: 52,250. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)

Lyon (Fra) 0
Barcelona (Spa) 0
Att: 57,889. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)

Feb 20
Atletico Madrid (Spa) 2 (Gimenez 78, Godin 83)
Juventus (Ita) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 67,193. **Ref:** Zwayer (Ger)

Schalke (Ger) 2 (Bentaleb pen 38, pen 45)
Manchester City (Eng) 3 (Aguero 18, Sane 85, Sterling 90)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 54,417. **Ref:** Del Cerro Grande (Spa)
Sent off: Otamendi (Manchester City) 68

2nd legs

Mar 5
Borussia Dortmund 0
Tottenham Hotspur 1 (Kane 49)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 66,099. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
Tottenham Hotspur 4-0 on agg

Real Madrid 1 (Marco Asensio 70)
Ajax 4 (Ziyech 7, David Neres 18, Tadic 62, Schone 72)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 77,013. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Sent off: Nacho (Real Madrid) 90+3
Ajax 5-3 on agg

Mar 6
Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Bernat 12)
Manchester United 3 (Lukaku 2, 30, Rashford pen 90+4)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 47,441. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Agg 3-3; Manchester United on away goals

Porto 3 (Francisco Soares 26, Marega 52, Alex Telles pen 117)
Roma 1 (De Rossi pen 37)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 2-1. **Att:** 49,029. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Porto 4-3 on agg

Mar12
Juventus 3 (Cristiano Ronaldo 27, 48, pen 86)
Atletico Madrid 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,884. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Juventus 3-2 on agg

Manchester City 7 (Aguero pen 35, 38, Sane 42, Sterling 56, Bernardo Silva 71, Foden 78, Gabriel Jesus 84)
Schalke 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 51,518. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)
Manchester City10-2 on agg

Mar13
Barcelona 5 (Messi pen 18, 78, Philippe Coutinho 31, Pique 81, Dembele 86)
Lyon 1 (Tousart 58)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 92,346. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)
Barcelona 5-1 on agg

Bayern Munich 1 (Matip og 39)
Liverpool 3 (Mane 26, 84, Van Dijk 69)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 68,145. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)
Liverpool 3-1 on agg

EUROPA LEAGUE

Round of 16

1st legs - Mar 7; 2nd legs - Mar14
Chelsea (Eng) v Dynamo Kiev (Ukr)
3-0, 5-0 (agg 8-0)
Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) v Benfica (Por)
1-0, 0-3 (aet) (agg 1-3)
Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger) v Internazionale (Ita)
0-0, 1-0 (agg 1-0)
Napoli (Ita) v Salzburg (Aut)
3-0, 1-3 (agg 4-3)
Rennes (Fra) v Arsenal (Eng)
3-1, 0-3 (agg 3-4)
Sevilla (Spa) v Slavia Prague (CzR)
2-2, 3-4 (aet) (agg 5-6)
Valencia (Spa) v Krasnodar (Rus)
2-1, 1-1 (agg 3-2)
Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) v Villarreal (Spa)
1-3, 1-2 (agg 2-5)

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

2018-19 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Racing (C)	25	17	6	2	43	16	57
Def y Justicia	25	15	8	2	33	18	53
Boca Juniors	25	15	6	4	42	18	51
River Plate	25	13	6	6	42	21	45
Atl Tucuman	25	12	6	7	36	29	42
Velez Sarsfield	25	11	7	7	34	25	40
Independiente	25	10	8	7	35	28	38
Union	25	9	9	7	29	24	36
Tigre (R)	25	9	9	7	39	42	36
Huracan	25	9	8	8	28	28	35
Lanus	25	9	7	9	27	32	34
Talleres	25	9	6	10	25	24	33
Aldosivi	25	9	6	10	21	24	33
Godoy Cruz	25	9	5	11	23	30	32
Newell's	25	7	8	10	26	23	29
Banfield	25	6	11	8	27	31	29
Estudiantes	25	7	8	10	21	25	29
Gimnasia LP	25	8	5	12	21	32	29
Patronato	25	7	5	13	29	37	26
Rosario	25	6	8	11	16	26	26
S Martin SJ (R)	25	6	7	12	24	34	25
Belgrano (R)	25	4	12	9	16	23	24
San Lorenzo	25	3	14	8	21	30	23
Colon	25	4	11	10	21	33	23
S Martin T (R)	25	4	11	10	25	38	23
Arg Juniors	25	5	7	13	15	28	22

The 4 teams with the lowest points-per-game average over the 3 most recent seasons were relegated

CONCACAF

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Mar 5/6; 2nd legs - Mar12-14
Houston Dynamo (USA) v Tigres UANL (Mex)
0-2, 0-1 (agg 0-3)
Independiente (Pan) v Sporting Kansas City (USA)
2-1, 0-3 (agg 2-4)
Monterrey (Mex) v Atlanta United (USA)
3-0, 0-1 (agg 3-1)
New York Red Bulls (USA) v Santos Laguna (Mex)
0-2, 2-4 (agg 2-6)

BERMUDA

2018-19 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PHC Zebras (C)	18	14	1	3	43	14	43
Robin Hood	18	11	6	1	55	22	39
Dandy Town	18	11	2	5	48	34	35
Dev Cougars	18	7	5	6	31	28	26
X-Roads	18	7	4	7	47	37	25
BAA	18	7	2	9	39	55	23
Boulevard	18	6	3	9	36	53	21
North Village	18	5	3	10	27	35	18
S'set Trojans (R)	18	2	5	11	27	47	11
Paget Lions (R)	18	2	5	11	22	50	11

CAYMAN ISLANDS

2018-19 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Scholars Int (C)	13	10	2	1	54	5	32
Bodden Town	13	10	2	1	47	8	32
Academy	13	8	4	1	50	12	28
Elite	13	8	3	2	56	16	27
Future	13	8	2	3	28	13	26
Roma United	13	7	4	2	35	14	25
Latinos	13	5	3	5	28	20	18
George Town	13	4	4	5	35	31	16
Sunset	13	4	3	6	27	26	15
Caym'n Ath	13	4	1	8	25	32	13
East End Utd	13	4	0	9	15	56	12
North Side	13	2	1	10	16	45	7
Savannah	13	1	1	11	9	66	4
Alliance	13	0	0	13	9	96	0

ASIA

AFC CUP

Preliminary round

1st legs - Feb 20; 2nd legs - Feb 27
Alay (Kyr) v Ahal (Tkm)
1-2, 0-1 (agg 1-3)
Colombo (Sri) v Transport United (Bhu)
7-1, 2-1 (agg 9-2)
Erchim (Mon) v Ryomyong (NKo)
0-3, 0-3 (agg 0-6)

Play-off round

1st legs - Feb 5/Mar 6; 2nd legs - Feb12/Mar13
Ahal v Khujand (Taj)
1-1, 0-0 (agg 1-1, Khujand on away goals)
Colombo v Chennaiyin (Ind)
0-0, 0-1 (agg 0-1)
Hilal Al Quds (Pal) v Al Nasr (Oma)
2-1, 1-0 (agg 3-1)
Ryomyong v Tai Po (HK)
0-0, 0-0 (aet) (agg 0-0, Tai Po 5-3 on pens)

● *Play-off round winners qualified for the group stage*

INDIA (I-League)

2018-19 – FINAL[1]	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chennai City (C)	20	13	4	3	48	28	43
East Bengal	20	13	3	4	37	20	42
Real Kashmir	19	10	6	3	25	14	36
Churchill Bros	20	9	7	4	35	23	34
Mohun Bagan	20	8	5	7	27	28	29
NEROCA	20	7	5	8	27	26	26
Aizawl	20	6	6	8	27	28	24
Indian Arrows	20	6	3	11	19	28	21
Gokulam	20	3	8	9	25	33	17
Minerva P'jab	19	4	5	10	10	19	17
Sh'g Lajong (R)	20	3	2	15	23	56	11

[1]*Pending decision on Real Kashmir's home game against Minerva Punjab, scheduled for Feb18 - Minerva refused to travel to play the game because of security concerns*

INDIA (Super League)

2018-19 Championship Final

Mar 17: Bengaluru 1 Goa 0 (aet).

OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND

2018-19 Championship Final

Mar 31: Eastern Suburbs 3 Team Wellington 0.

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(R) = relegated
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(QF) = qualified for finals

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EDITOR Gavin Hamilton
ASSISTANT EDITOR Nich Hills
DESIGN DIRECTOR Kevin Eason
DESIGN EDITOR Jamie Latchford
DEPUTY DESIGN EDITOR Daniel Franklin
PICTURE EDITOR Duncan Bond

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EDITORIAL
Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Farnborough, Hants GU14 7BF
Email: world_soccer@ti-media.com
General enquiries: +44 (0) 1252 555213

ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP
Matthew Johnston
Tel: +44 (0) 1252 555367
Email: matthew.johnston@ti-media.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER Nigel Davies
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Gareth Beesley
GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR Andrea Davies

International licensing enquiries
+44 (0) 20 314 85490
Email: bianca.hamilton-foster@ti-media.com

TI Media

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WORLD SOCCER SUBSCRIPTIONS
PO Box 20501, 1001 NM Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel: +44 (0) 330 333 1113

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Cup clash...Club America's Bruno Valdez (left) and Jair Pereira of Guadalajara in March's Copa MX quarter-final

CLUB AMERICA v GUADALAJARA

Latin America's Super Clasico is a clash of cultures

These are the two most successful teams in Mexico: Club America have won the league 13 times compared to Guadalajara's 12, neither has ever been relegated and both attract huge support throughout the country, as well as in the United States.

That, however, is where all similarities end in a rivalry that is as much a culture clash as anything else.

Based in Mexico City and owned by a huge media company, Club America are seen as the wealthy elite from the capital who import the best foreign players that money can buy.

Guadalajara, on the other hand, are regarded as the poor, provincial upstarts from Jalisco – home of mariachi and tequila – who only recruit Mexican players.

America edged ahead in terms of domestic dominance in December when they beat Cruz Azul 2-0 on aggregate in the Apertura Final. It was a campaign to forget for Guadalajara, who failed to even make the play-offs as they finished outside the top eight.

And things aren't looking much better for the team known as "*Chivas*" (the goats) in this year's Clausura, either.

Having topped the league table after three games, they lost 2-0 at home to their great rivals in March and slipped down the table to 11th place – just three days after being knocked out of the quarter-finals of the Copa MX by the same opponents and by the same score. WS

Fanatical... Guadalajara supporters

ON BOTH SIDES

OSCAR RUGGERI
● 1992-93; (coach) 2004
● (coach) 2001-02

LEO BEENHAKKER
● (coach) 1994-95, 2003-04
● (coach) 1996

JAVIER AGUIRRE
● 1979-80, 1981-84
● 1987-93

FRANCISCO JAVIER RODRIGUEZ
● 2002-08
● 2013-14

JESUS MOLINA
● 2011-14
● 2019-present

IGNACIO AMBRIZ
● (coach) 2012
● (coach) 2015-16

CLASSIC ENCOUNTERS

1944 Feb 20
Guadalajara won the first two games, but then America thrashed them 7-2 and now lead in head-to-head games, with 84 victories, 74 losses and 75 draws.

1983 May 22
The second leg of the championship semi-final would become known as "*La Bronca del '83*" ("The Riot of '83") with players from both sides fighting one another as Guadalajara won 3-0 to overturn a 2-1 first-leg deficit and progress to the Final.

1984 Jun 10
In the only time the two have met in the league play-off Final, America won 3-1 after drawing the first leg 2-2.

1986 Aug 17
Another on-field brawl began when Guadalajara's Fernando Quirarte was shown a red card and only ended when the referee sent off all 22 players. With the game abandoned, the last 18 minutes had to be played later in the season and finished with America winning 1-0.

"Art of Football bring out
the beauty in the game's most
memorable moments" Copa90

"Art of Football capture classic
moments in a vibrant,
contemporary style" The Guardian

"Art of Football get it.
those split-second moments
are treasured memories and their
artwork captures them in a
classy and stylish way" Ball Street

"Art of Football's shirts capture
the vibrancy of the game
like no other" Dirty Tackle

"Art of Football - where the
beautiful game comes to life"
Hitesh Ratna, Editor, FourFourTwo

"The Art of Football team create
truly unique and authentic content
that is designed to emotionally connect
real fans to the biggest moments
in the game" Adidas Uk

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